

GAMEROOM

December 2007 Volume 19, Number 12

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by Alex Fuchs

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- ☆ Dune Buggy (car)
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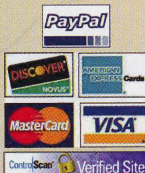


After

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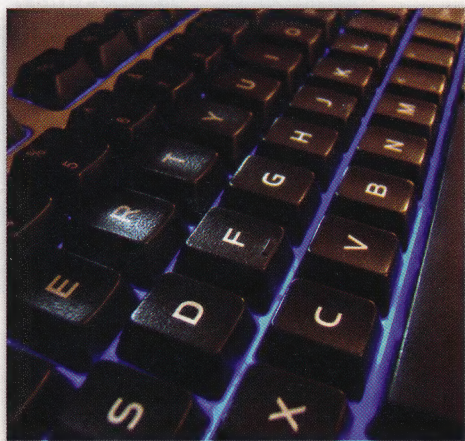
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CHAOS CENTRAL

Winter is the prime game room season, with plenty of time for tweaking your pins or fine-tuning those arcade games.

December is typically one of the busiest months of the year, what with the holiday gift buying frenzy, the preparations for visitors, and of course the Christmas holiday itself. However, in other ways December is actually a rather quiet time—the yard work is done, the night comes early, and the weather encourages us all to stay inside. This month is ideal for some quality game room time, be it renovating, decorating, or just plain participating. From working on that long-term pinball project to trying to beat your personal best on your favorite video game, winter seems designed to give you a guilt-free conscience as you fritter away the hours.

If you're in the mood to take a break from taking a break, GameRoom Magazine has everything needed to make those wasted moments seem productive. We've got one treat after another, including the second annual GameRoom Hot Gifts Guide—our look at the hottest in cool gifts (yes, I'm mixing hot & cold, but trust me—it's definitely not lukewarm!)

We've also got a great look at Ken Schaffer's Stewart's Root Beer restaurant, and coverage of the VGXPO and PinExpo events. Mitch Gerson's got some fascinating GameRoom News this month, and Michael Ford continues his great series on restoring arcade artwork, this month with a look at having your restored artwork printed.

There's more (of course), but why spoil all the surprises? Sit back, flip through this month's issue, and have fun!

The Game is Never Over,

Kevin Steele, Editor



See more Pinball Expo pictures on page 27!

Okay, nag time. I'm *completely out* of Coin-Op Confessions. None. Nada. Zip. If you want an "easy in" to getting your picture published in the magazine, this is the time—I'll take just about anything! Send me your photo and story to info@gameroommagazine.com. (See my *Last Word* column for my own coin-op confession!) Send it in—you'll get a cool t-shirt, and my undying gratitude. Thanks!

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(*) - Look For That Show's Ad Inside This Issue
Dates and Locations Subject to Late Change. Contact Promoter To Confirm

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- * 1st SUPER AUCTIONS San Jose, CA Rob Storment (714) 535-7000
- * 1st SUPER AUCTIONS Knoxville, TN Rob Storment (714) 535-7000
- * 8th SUPER AUCTIONS Orlando, FL Rob Storment (714) 535-7000
- * 15th SUPER AUCTIONS Dallas, TX Rob Storment (714) 535-7000

2008 Show Calendar Coming Soon!



GameRoom (USPS 004-828) (ISSN 1049-3948) Vol. 19, No. 12 December 2007. Published monthly by Steele Publishing LLC, 12943 Kingston Way, North Royalton, OH 44133-5968. Rates: \$36-1 year (US), \$54-1st Class 1 year (US), \$66-2 years, \$57-1 year (Canada), \$105-1 year (World). Periodicals Postage Paid at Cleveland, OH and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: GameRoom Magazine, 12943 Kingston Way, North Royalton, OH 44133-5968. © 2007 Steele Publishing, LLC. Reprint or reproduction of any material in part or in whole without the publishers' written permission is strictly forbidden. Editorial views expressed by contributing writers are not necessarily endorsed by GameRoom. All rights to letters sent to GameRoom will be treated as unconditionally assigned to GameRoom for publication unless they are labeled otherwise. GameRoom assumes no responsibility for the authority of advertisers to sell transferred property or the accuracy of their advertisements.



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3 Austin, TX
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Questions?
Comments? Rants?
Raves?

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Kevin, attached are photos of our 2 year old grandson Trey, playing Lord of the Rings. It took him about 2 months, but he can control the game and break 2 million by himself although he does ignore the shot marquee. Unfortunately he also knows how to turn it on and off so he plays at some very strange hours!

Great job on the magazine! I just hope you're making enough from it to keep it going...

Fred Molis, Jacksonville, FL

Fred, your grandson is adorable, and I'm glad to see you're already helping him learn the important things in life! Keep up the good work, and let me know when he starts beating your high scores!

Hi Kevin,
I just read that you have closed RetroBlast. It was a great site, but everything has a life expectancy. If the passion is not there anymore then there is no reason to carry on with it. I think you made a very wise decision. I ran a site for three years (towards the end it seemed like an eternity). In the third year the gas ran out and I found that I was just pushing out the content with lacking enthusiasm. When I finally made the decision to end the site, a huge burden was lifted. I never regretted it.

Good luck with the new and improved magazine. I look forward to reading it.

Donny

Donny, it was a very hard decision to make, but I definitely wanted to focus my energies on creating the best magazine I could, so the choice to close RetroBlast was a necessary one. That said, I have some great news! A group of enthusiasts couldn't bear to see the site go, so they



A Pinball Wizard in training:
Trey plays the silver ball

banded together and have (with my blessing) created an entirely new RetroBlast.com! Check it out if you get the chance: it's everything I ever wanted to do with RetroBlast, but never had the time to implement! www.RetroBlast.com

Hi Kevin,
After having stated that he had grown up in Coney Island, I expected Mitch Gerson's article, "Thanks for All the Memories; a Farewell to Coney Island" to be an homage. Instead, he comes across as a new suburban elitist who has forgotten his roots.

At a time when everyone in the area is lamenting the veritable desecration of Coney Island, Mr. Gerson is "...thrilled that Coney Island is on the verge of a real renewal"? Change is expected and progress cannot

occur without evolution, but the plans Thor Equities has for the beachfront is mall-mentality capitalism at its worst.

What about all of the families that continue to enjoy one of the last remaining affordable, outdoor entertainment spots geared specifically towards lower-income, local families? "I personally did not find the seediness 'charming'... it was dirty, crime-ridden, and unsafe..."? Mr. Gerson obviously had not been to Coney Island in recent years when as far as the eyes could see were good people and families enjoying themselves with nary a whining child, aloof teen, or bored adult in the bunch.

He "...can't wait...and spend a night...in one of the hotels that is sure to spring up"? "...it will be the Coney Island I...dreamt about"? If your dream for Coney Island is

for it to be a meager attempt at copying the wonders of expensive Las Vegas then take your vast disposable income and get on a plane. Please leave the rest of us to take a train ride or our feet to the rich history and wonder of Coney Island.

Sincerely,
Robyn Howard

Dear Robyn,

Just so you know, I lived in Coney for just over 30 years and moved out around 2001. Many of my friends and family still live there are quite happy there. We frequently have debates that are very much in line with your comments about this very issue.

I fully recognize the progress that Coney has made. The Stadium is fantastic, the boardwalk is in good repair, and the public bathrooms are new and generally pretty clean (as opposed to the disasters that they were as recently as 1999/2000). I also haven't forgotten the absolutely stunning new Subway train station as well, once again bringing thongs of people to Coney's beaches/amusements.

I had visited Coney this past July (that was when I took the photos featured in the article) and there's no question on any level that it was packed and being enjoyed by literally thousands of people.

But Coney is, and has been for over 40+ years, a mere shadow of what it was and can be once again.

Do I think that Thor Equities is honorable and will come through for the community? I can't say for sure. But that's why our city officials are watching this so closely.

Coney has always had a very colorful history of folks waxing poetic about the "great old days of Coney". If you go back and look deeply into it's history, there were the days of the "mining town" like atmosphere that existed there in the 1800's. Folks back then got all up in arms when the larger commercial parks such as Dreamland, Luna and others started to spring up.

Cries of "Coney Island is losing what makes it special" were being made as early as the 1890's. This has happened many times over the years in Coney. The bottom line is that Coney has and will be always about reinventing itself totally and completely (as history has proven).

The one thing you and I definitely both agree on is the fact that *we're both* passionate about Coney. We may look at this from different perspectives but there's no

question in my mind that we both recognize that Coney is a special place.

I would love to see it reinvented. But don't forget that we do have the amazing folks at the Coney Island Museum to keep an eye on the place so that things don't get too out of hand, and of course involved people like yourself keeping a wary eye on change there.

We need people with your passion to

watch over the change. But in my opinion, as a longtime former resident, change can and will be good for Coney.

I sincerely appreciate your comments, and hope that you make your voice heard in the town/council meetings that are currently taking place in Coney over this entire issue.

Mitch Gerson

To: Kevin,
The gift shop in the Cracker Barrel restaurant is selling this humorous birthday card. The cat is playing a William's Friendship 7 pinball machine from 1962.
Sincerely,
Dm Manguardt



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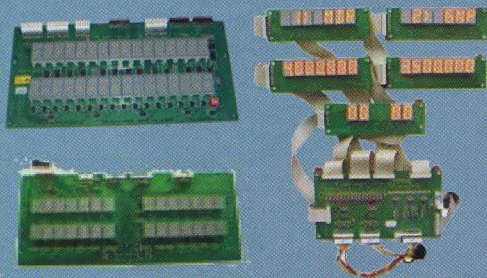


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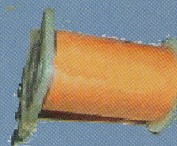
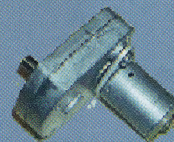


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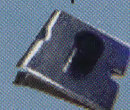
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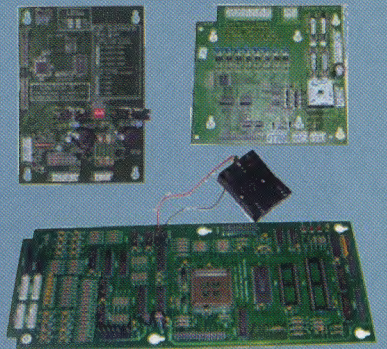
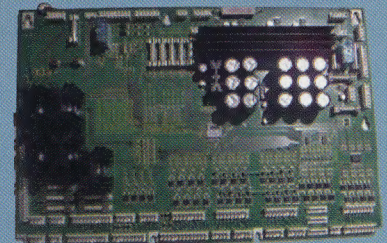
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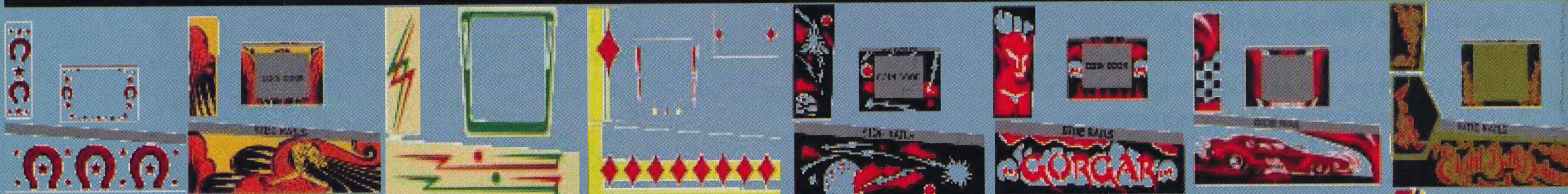


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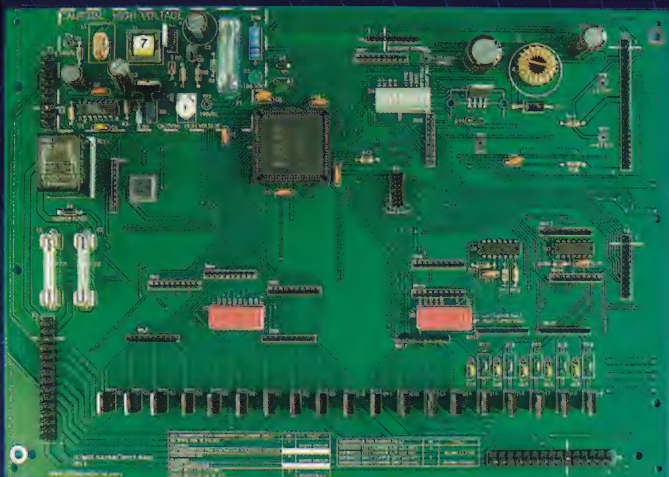
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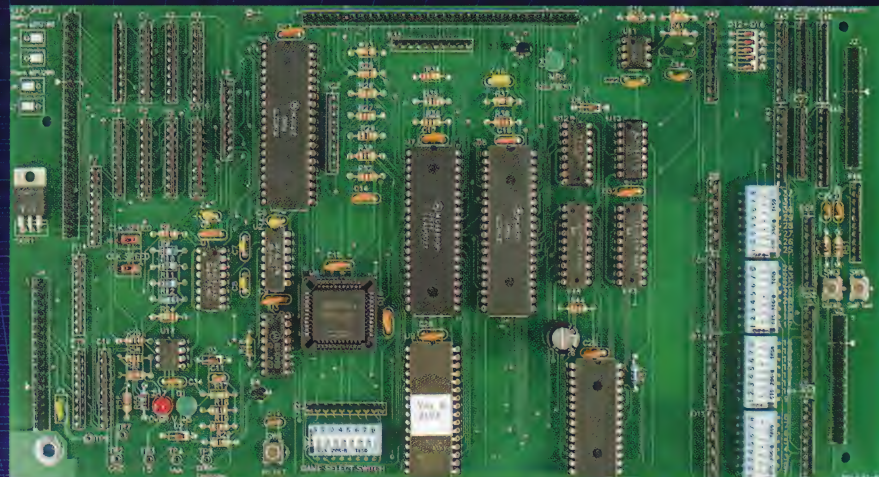
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Black Jack	Mr. & Ms. Pac-Man
Black Pyramid	Mystic
BMX	Night Rider
Centaur	Nitro GroundShaker
Centaur II	Paragon
Cybernaut	Playboy
Dolly Parton	Power Play
Eight Ball	Rapid Fire
Eight Ball Deluxe	Rolling Stones
Eight Ball Deluxe Ltd	Silverball Mania
Elektra	Six Million Dollar Man
Embryon	Skateball
Evel Knievel	Space Invaders
Fathom	Speakeasy 2&4 Player
Fathom (New)	Spectrum
Fireball II	Spy Hunter
Fireball Classic	Star Trek
Flash Gordon	Strikes and Spares
Freedom	Super Sonic
Frontier	Vector
Future Spa	Vector (New)
Gold Ball	Viking
Grand Slam	Voltan
Granny & the Gators*	X's and O's
Harlem GlobeTrotters	Xenon
Hotdoggin'	
KISS	
Kings of Steel	
Lost World	
Mata Hari	

Non-Stern/Bally Games

Sexy Girl
 Big Ball Bowling*
 Black Sheep Squadron

Included Stern® Games

Ali
 Big Game
 Catacomb
 Cheetah
 Cosmic Princess
 Dracula
 Dragonfist
 Flight 2000
 Freefall
 Galaxy
 Hot Hand
 Iron Maiden
 Lazer Lord
 Lectronamo
 Lightning
 Magic
 Memory Lane
 Meteor
 Nine Ball
 Nugent
 Orbitor 1
 Pinball
 Quicksilver
 Seawitch
 Split Second
 Star Gazer
 Stars
 Stingray
 Trident
 Viper
 Wild Fyre

* not compatible with the Ultimate Solenoid Driver Board

GameRoom News

Compiled by
Mitch Gerson



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

This is such a great time of year. We eat too much, we party too much and hopefully get too many great presents! (NAH, is there really such a thing as too many?).

I am pleased to share with you a ton of great news items this month in addition to some really fun toys you may wish to buy for your loved one (I'm assuming that would be yourself).

I hope you've enjoy my first year here at GameRoom as the News Editor. I'm looking forward to 2008 with all of you.

Enjoy the news and see you next year!
Insert Coin to Continue, Mitch

Table Top Pac-Man



For those of you who are handy and have built arcade machines for home use this is going to seem outrageously expensive. But, for those of you looking for that "perfect gift" and have oodles of money here's something cool to consider. Just out is this tabletop 25th Anniversary Pac-Man/Galaga/Ms. Pac-Man Machine being sold only at Brookstone. Sure you can build it for less, but not everyone has the time or ability. The dimensions are 16" w x 15" d x 25" h, and will "only" set you back a cool \$1995.00.

Show the one you love, just HOW MUCH you love them by purchasing this little beauty here: <http://tinyurl.com/ywlnn5>

Arcade-in-a-box Announces Xbox 360 Arcade Controllers



Dying for a true arcade experience using Xbox Live Arcade? For those of you in the know, you have probably already downloaded the classic arcade games of your youth via the Xbox Live Arcade. But, I'm sure you've already realized that playing Pac-Man on an Xbox controller just doesn't get the job done.

Well, your troubles are over as Arcade-In-A-Box has just launched a line of sweet custom 360 controllers. As per the press release:

"The Xbox 360 control panels feature authentic arcade controls that are identical to those used on your favorite arcade machines including Street Fighter, Mortal Kombat, and Galaga. In addition to being compatible with the Xbox 360, the arcade controllers can also be used with a Windows PC."

Specs:

- 5" L x 10" D x 4.5" H
- Authentic Arcade Buttons and Joysticks
- Optional Custom Overlay
- You choose the colors for T-molding, buttons and joystick (D-Pad, A, B, X, Y, RB, LB, Start, Back, and Guide buttons are included)
- Optional Headset Jack
- Wired USB controller means it's also com-

patible with Windows XP and Vista

- Constructed with 3/4 black melamine coated wood to give that authentic arcade weight and feel
- Optional joystick upgrade to the Mag-Stik Plus or Sanwa JLF
- Your choice of button types, either Concave or Convex

Pricing: Single-Player \$149, Dual-Player \$299

Purchase yours here: <http://arcadeinabox.com/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=42>

Ultimate Dragon's Lair

Jason Finn's Dragon's Lair Museum features Dragon's Lair cab' serial #1 ! (owned by the creator Don Bluth himself).



I love Dragon's Lair, but I'm sure you know that by now as I've mentioned it a few times this year in the news. The game itself really isn't all that good, but it was (and still is) so unique it's hard not to love it.

Well, I think there's love... and there's love. You have to check out Jason Finn's house. He has a full basement as a shrine to Dragon's Lair (he's really focused on only that one game!) and it's not to be missed.

I stumbled across this site dragonslairfans.com and it's truly the most extensive collection of DL items I've ever seen in one place. There are other super fan collection photos, but you really have to look over Jason's. There simply can't possibly be a more extensive DL collection in the world out there (prove me wrong!).

www.dragonslairfans.com/collectors/collectors.htm

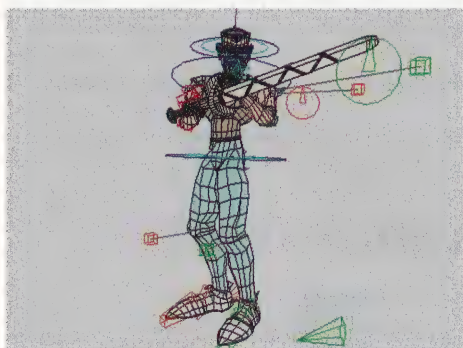
Dragon's Lair Love Continues



See? I told you, Dragon's Lair is loved by all. Charlie Breakiron is a digital artist and as a tech demo for some work he's doing has created some 3D animated DL artwork.

It's all a work in progress but it's cool nonetheless. I can't tell if he's planning on recreating the whole game in 3D computer animation, but it's totally worth a quick look to see what he's accomplished.

For fun, he's also revised Dirk's look in a short demo video matching his original appearance based on some old artwork for Dirk's look that was discarded by Don Bluth for the Dirk that we know and love today.



The two links go to different parts of his website, so be sure to visit both to download the short demo video:

www.breakiron.com/CharacterSetup.htm

<http://tinyurl.com/2es2ns>

This Is Not A Dragon's Lair Item



Ok, it's a **Space Ace** item so it is related, but I'll be brief: if you're lucky enough to own an HD PC screen (drool), then you're sure to enjoy this fabulous new version of the Laser Game classic Space Ace completely digitally re-mastered in HD.

As per the press release:

"This release of Don Bluth's legendary animated arcade game features video transferred directly from the original film source, delivering the sharpest images and most vibrant colors ever – even better than the original laser disc release. The follow-up to last year's release of Dragon's Lair PC HD, Space Ace PC HD also comes with a completely new five-channel surround sound audio mix. Space Ace HD PC will be available this fall at many fine game retailers as well as at www.digitalleisure.com. Look for Blu-ray and HD DVD releases of Space Ace in 2008."

Slot Machine Fridge

Now you can play the slots and help yourself to a beer or soda all at the same time.



OK, not exactly, this is a slot machine in looks only, but it does feature sound effects, lighting and a nicely sized compartment for your favorite chilly items. It also features a switch to keep items hot (soup perhaps?). What

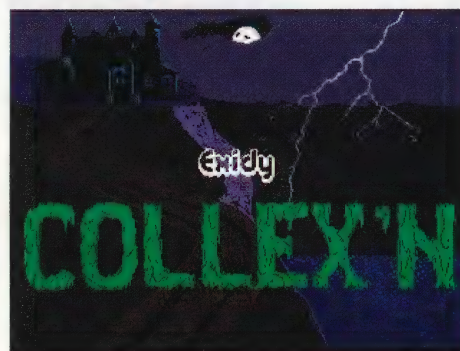
ever you use this for you're sure to be the envy of your slot machine buddies. Check out these specs:

"Keeps beverages cool or warm with a flick of a switch. Ideal for home, car, caravan, boat, office, bedroom uses. Can be powered by AC115V mains or DC12V car battery (adaptor included). When the screen switch is "ON" and the screen button is pushed, the LED blinks and you will hear the voice of the character. Three different phrases can be heard randomly."

Order yours here for about \$45:
www.pachislo.com/pachislo/cw.html

Exidy Multi Game Kit!

If you're not familiar with the Exidy line of games shame on you. But it's very likely you've dropped in a quarter or two over the years playing one of their many gun games from the very early 80's.



Well I have some good news if you own a dedicated gun game. Some enterprising folks are creating a multi game kit that will replace some existing ROM chips on your arcade board allowing you to play all of the following games:

- Crossbow
- Cheyenne
- Combat
- Crackshot
- Chiller
- Clay Pigeon
- Hit 'n Miss 3.0
- Who Dunit
- Catch-22

This is a project in progress so pricing hasn't been finalized, but it's being estimated to run around \$300-\$350. The estimated pricing may seem high, but I doubt for the work that this will take to pull off they will be selling very many kits so the price seems fair.

Find out more on this on going project here: www.widel.com/440faq.htm This project still needs help and you can read more about it here: <http://tinyurl.com/2pr4at>

Rob At Coin-Op TV Live Does It Again

Well the King of Kong controversy has died down quite a bit, but there's still a lot going on for those who are knee deep in their personal involvement with the movie and it's stars. Rob managed to finally snag an exclusive interview with Ed Cunningham, who I had the pleasure of interviewing this past September for GameRoom, but that was before all of the Billy Mitchell drama started to really come to a head.



See how Ed handled himself under the investigative grilling by Rob and his crew here:

www.thestream.tv/watch.php?v=396

Qsonix Unveils New Jukebox



Is this the most sophisticated home Jukebox yet? I don't know about you, but I am enamored with the whole MP3 revolution and the ability to pipe in music through my house via various methods wirelessly.

But, it would be really neat to have a beautiful Jukebox to do this for me, rather than a plain old PC. Well my dreams and your prayers have been answered. Behold—the QJB110. As per the press release:

"The new model's beautiful, handcrafted solid walnut and die cast metal authentic exterior showcases the most powerful music management system in the world - along with the industry's simplest and fastest drag-and-drop user interface.....the QJB110 Nostalgic Digital Jukebox's powerful music system stores up to 9,000 CDs and delivers studio reference quality digital sound.....the QJB110 operates as a stand-alone jukebox music system with built-in 360W amp, speakers and subwoofer and as a multi-zone music management system that can be shared throughout the home. It includes iPod transfer, CD burning, web browsing and automatic Internet updates...."

For additional information about Qsonix, visit www.qsonix.com. I don't know the price yet... but I have a feeling this isn't going to come cheap!

Spider-Man Black Limited Edition

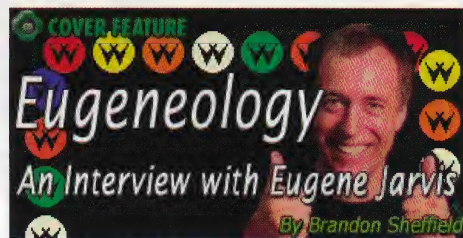
Hmm, I struggled with this as is this really a new product or just a collector's item?

BLACK SPIDER-MAN
LIMITED EDITION



Pinballnews.com had some great photos of it (above) though that I couldn't resist so I guess Stern knows what they're doing. Aside from some cosmetic change on the sides and backboard the only really neat new feature is the slick chrome detailing that was added by the flippers...oohhh..shiny. What was I saying? Oh yeah, the playfield is unchanged, but if you must have one or want to know more visit www.sternpinball.com.

Eugeneology: An Interview With Eugene Jarvis



I stumbled across this great interview article with Eugene Jarvis (the father of Robotron and other classics) that I think you too will enjoy. Eugene has been making the rounds over the last few months touting his new company "Raw Thrills", but face it, we all know and love him for those classic titles.

Here's a teaser from the online article:

"As the creator of Defender, Robotron (and accompanying two-joystick control system), NARC, and the Cruis'n series, his reach in gaming, especially as concerns arcades, is incredibly wide. Even if you've never been inside an arcade, his influence can be felt in the glut of indie and downloadable games using the Robotron control scheme, such as Geometry Wars and Blast Factor. More recently, Jarvis has returned to the arcade scene with his company Raw Thrills, whose first game was the very controversial light gun shooter Target: Terror."

Set your sights here for the full interview:

www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/1416/eugeneology_an_interview.php

Lightspace Play 2.0



Wow. This is pretty neat stuff. An interactive video gaming floor. I've seen this type of tech at trade shows but this appears to be the first gaming application for this floor. Basically it's a computer driven LED floor that reacts to pressure when you step on it.

Apparently the company has readied a commercial arcade version that plays some basic games that should appeal nicely to families and children.

As a matter of fact, they have a great video on their website that is fun to watch as kids scream in delight as the light dances around their feet. Here's an excerpt from their press release:

"For the first time ever, Play 2.0 is available as a coin-operated system giving it the necessary capabilities to expand its reach into the arcade, mall and operator markets. Each game has been updated with additional levels, scoring, elimination and time play."

Check it out in action right here:
www.lightspacecorp.com/products/light-spaceplay/video.php

Virtual Bowling



This would be so perfect for a home arcade, I can't wait until I can buy one used. This is Brunswick Bowling's brand new hybrid physical/virtual bowling center. Basically you take a real bowling ball (slightly lighter/smaller than a standard alley ball) and roll it down the lane. As it passes under the video screen, a computer takes over analyzing the spin, speed etc of the ball and continues the balls journey down the "alley" as a 3D animated ball.

This seems pretty cool and looks like a fun game to try out. I'm sure you'll see this soon at your local arcade.

For more, visit the official website here:

www.brunswickbowling.com/virtualbowling

Xbox 360 Arcade Version

This is interesting: an official "arcade edition" of the Xbox 360 console. Microsoft is taking the Xbox live Arcade very seriously and they're definitely gunning for Nintendo's "casual" market by this interesting new bundled edition of the Xbox 360.

The machine is a basic budget edition of the 360 pricing at \$279 (their least expensive version to date), but it comes with some some arcade games as part of the pack. The game list include: Pac-Man Championship

Edition, Uno, Luxor 2, Boom Boom Rock and Feeding Frenzy. This version does not come with a Hard Drive though.

If you haven't tried live yet, it's really cool to be able to play a classic game like Joust and have someone join your game just like in the old days of a real arcade.

Read more about it over at PCWorld.com:

<http://tinyurl.com/37jr3m>

NEXT GENERATION also had a write up with some photos of the new box:

<http://tinyurl.com/2yrwtm>

Stern's Wheel Of Fortune™ Pinball Machine



Stern has just announced their new Wheel of Fortune pinball machine. I've personally never been a big fan of Wheel of Fortune, but considering the show's been on the air for about 25 years I'm clearly in the minority. The machine looks great and has some fun features. Check out their press release:

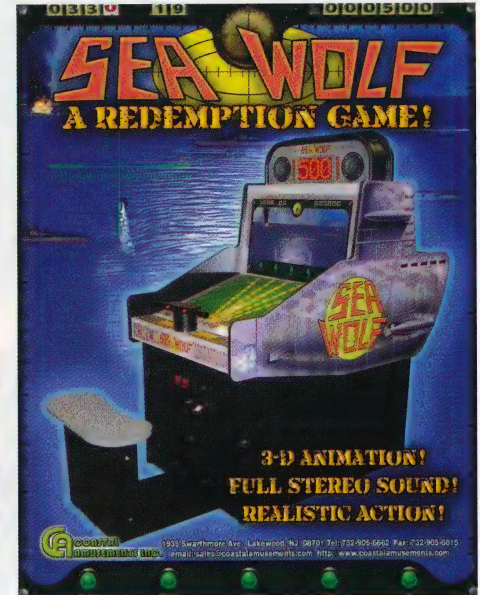
"WHEEL OF FORTUNE™ pinball features original speech by Pat Sajak, host of the Wheel of Fortune television show, as well as Charlie O'Donnell, the show's announcer. Backglass art also features Pat Sajak and hostess Vanna White. Dennis Nordman, Keith Johnson, and the engineering staff at Stern Pinball designed the WHEEL OF FORTUNE™ pinball machine. The WHEEL OF FORTUNE™ pinball machine plays like the television game show. Pinball players start the game by spinning the wheel on the playfield, thus collecting points and/or prizes in their Prize Bank. Players must then hit the three-bobble head contestants to collect consonants and vowels, to solve the puzzle on the dot matrix display. Once the puzzle is solved, the player collects the points and/or prizes in their Prize Bank."

Check out www.sternpinball.com and the excellent Pinballnews.com site for more photos:

<http://tinyurl.com/2c95f6>

Classic Arcade Game Sea Wolf Returns! (Sort of)

This seems really cool. Costal Amusements has re-imagined the old arcade classic Sea Wolf as a redemption game, sporting similar artwork and play mechanics but with all new up-to-date graphics and looks.



Read more about it here: www.coastal-amusements.com/newproducts.htm

Got a Hot News Tip?

We're always looking for exciting game room news and we need your help!

New coin-op, gameroom, and retrogaming product releases, industry announcements, coming events, updates on stories we're tracking—they're all fair game for inclusion in the pages of GameRoom News. If you've got something you feel is news-worthy, please send it in!

Send news tips to:
news@gameroommagazine.com



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Stewart's Root Beer

A Vacation Tradition

by Jimmy Rosen
and Ken Schaffer



The Stewart's Stop by Jimmy Rosen

Every August, it has been a tradition for my family to rent a vacation house in Ocean City, NJ for a week. Usually we share the house with another family. Both families look forward to the trip all year. Located about 30 minutes south of Atlantic City, Ocean City, NJ (not to be confused with Ocean City, MD) is a very family-oriented town with a warm nostalgic feel to it. We like to stay at the north end of town where it is fairly quiet but still within walking distance of the boardwalk where there are fun shops, arcades, amusement parks, miniature golf courses and wonderful food. Morning bike rides on the boardwalk, body surfing in the chilly Atlantic, Mac and Manco's Pizza, chili at The Varsity Inn, Kohr Bros ice cream are a few of the many activities we have to do each year. If there is one negative about the experience, it's that the week goes by too fast.

On the way home, I've made it a point to stop at a Stewart's Root Beer restaurant about 10 miles from Ocean City in Northfield. Stewart's has been around since 1924 and is well-known here in the east. This specific location is owned by Ken Schaffer, a long time coin-op and pop culture memorabilia collector... and friend. He and his partner have done a great job with the restaurant. It has a real vintage feel using much of Ken's personal collection. There's lots of neon and old advertising throughout the building. A few model trains zip along track inside too, a great touch. Ken also has several vintage pins and video games that he actively rotates from his personal collection. The food is great and reasonably priced. Burgers, chicken, shakes, floats...all the important food groups.

I've asked Ken to give a little background on his life and his association with Stewart's.



A Look Back by Ken Schaffer

Growing up, my parents were antiques collectors and subsequently, became antiques dealers. Today, they own and operate The Ardmore Antiques Mall, a Suburban Philadelphia Antiques Mall just outside the city in Drexel Hill, Pa.

As a child in the 70s, I dreaded the Saturday afternoon car trips to Flea Markets, yard sales, and two of my parent's favorite spots at the time, Renningers and Shupps Grove in the Adamstown and Reading, PA areas. They were long days and I swore I'd never own an antique! Gradually, that changed.

In seventh grade, a friend of mine had a pinball machine in his basement. It was fairly "new" at the time since this was 1976. The game was Gottlieb's Kings & Queens. We would spend countless hours trying to "break 1000". (Unlike many of today's games where you sometimes get 1,000 just for shooting the ball!). I never forgot that game and finally found one just this year through a Mr. Pinball Classified ad. I got very lucky as I bought the game sight unseen on the seller's word as I had a good feeling talking to him. It turned out to be one of the nicest originals I've seen after it was fully shopped and this

will certainly be a keeper in my collection. From 1976 to the day I finally found “the” Kings and Queens, there were many years of collecting, traveling searching! Looking back, the early trips with my parents were nothing compared to what I started once I caught the coin op bug.

In between, I went on to start a mobile DJ company as a teenager and my love of music became another seed for the eventual hobby. I collected 45s, eventually memorabilia and of course, had to have a jukebox. From Ms. Pac to a jukebox, then a few pinball machines and a slot machine in 1995, my passion (and travels) began.

I’ve met many great people along the way, including Jimmy Rosen. Jimmy and I met years ago as our common hobby led me to his Antiques & Collectibles Mall, The Old Sled Works in Duncannon, PA and the home of Jimmy’s Soda Fountain. Jimmy and I stayed in touch and have been friends since that first visit.

I always said that I wanted to share my enjoyment of the hobby with others through a vintage themed restaurant. I bought a house that was conducive to the hobby and my collection took over! I started a website at gameroomconnection.com as a collector’s resource and eventually, my home was featured on HGTV in their Ultimate Collector’s series. Around the same time, my collection was also featured in GameRoom



Magazine. Ironically, that was five years ago in the November 2002 issue.

My thoughts at the time were that my home collection would be a good test run for a commercial venture with thoughts of that restaurant in mind. Eventually, the restaurant did come to fruition, but little did I know that my home collection would grow so large that I would have to scale down to a fraction of what I accumulated to put it to commercial use. I was thinking the opposite, but my “test run” at home and personal involvement in the hobby greatly outpaced my commercial dreams and practical square footage to

display everything.

About a year later, in the fall of 2003, a close friend of mine who was in the restaurant business called. He owned a Stewart’s Root Beer Restaurant on the Ocean City boardwalk in Ocean City, NJ and found an inland location nearby in Northfield on Tilton Road. He needed a partner, and after about an hour’s discussion over dinner, the idea was launched. We were doing it. We negotiated a lease, spent the better part of the next month planning our concept and started construction just six weeks later in December 2003. Our target was to open in





Jimmy Rosen (left) and Ken Schaffer (right)

spring and on March 5, 2004, Stewart's of Northfield officially opened with bang. There were lines day and night, people enjoying the vintage theme, and kids of all ages playing

the games. We had the 1962 World Series Pitch and Bat, some great EM Pins, classic videos, a Batman Kiddie Ride, trains circling the restaurant for the kids and an authentic

1952 Seeburg C Jukebox playing the oldies. Every available wall was full of memorabilia, lots of local interest items from Philadelphia and Atlantic City and musical and pop culture artifacts from the 50s through 70s. Our popularity led to many local stories and news clips and the store is still the favorite family spot four years later. Our clientele is a combination of local families who patronize us regularly, local business people and the transient summer crowd who found us in their travels to the shore. They now come back every summer and we see the same summer visitors time and time again. It's a dream that I pursued and a hobby that altered my career path. Little did I know that my childhood experience with antiques and an innocent pinball machine in seventh grade would lead to all of this!

If you're visiting the South Jersey Shore, we're located just minutes off of the Garden State Parkway. From Parkway exit 36, we are 1 mile east at 807 Tilton Road. **GR**

Stewart's History

In 1924, Frank Stewart set out to develop the world's best-tasting root beer which he intended to sell in order to supplement his income as a schoolteacher. With the secret recipes in hand, he soon opened his first Stewart's Drive-In where he served ice-cold Stewart's Root Beer in tall, frosty mugs. The creamy taste of Stewart's Root Beer was an instant success and has been enjoyed by consumers for over 80 years!



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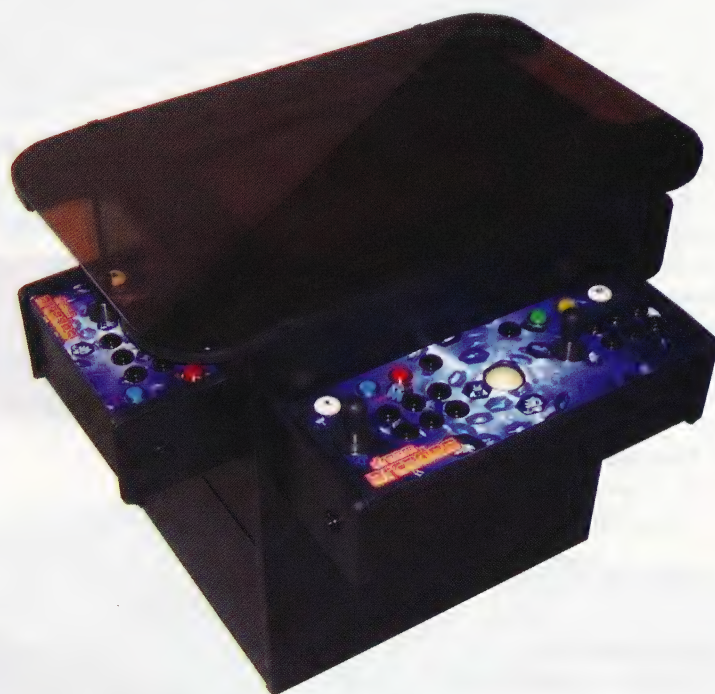


www.fabfan.com

The GameRoom Magazine

Hot Game Room Gifts Guide 2007

by James Hills



Looking for the perfect gift for your home game room? Well, look no further—welcome to the 2007 edition of our Hot GameRoom Gifts Guide! Here is our selection of some of the newest, hottest, and most amazing new ways to keep your family entertained this holiday season. The list includes both big and small, in prices ranging from top-tier to budget-friendly. Happy shopping!

Console Classix

Arcade and modern consoles shouldn't be the only games played in your gameroom, but until recently classic console game fans were limited to the meager selection of games provided by Xbox Live Arcade, GameTap, and the Wii's Virtual Console. Console Classix presents a different option.

Instead of selling the titles, the company has developed a sort of online rental service that features more than 3,000 classic console games from systems including: Atari 2600, ColecoVision, Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES), Sega Game Gear, Sega Genesis, and Sega Master System.



Console Classix

\$5 / month or \$50 / annual

www.consoleclassix.com

Dreamcade 2.0 3-Sided Cocktail Arcade

Dream Arcades has been known and respected for making great arcade kits and last year they introduced the Dreamcade line of ready-to-play home arcades. Now they have taken Dreamcade to the next level with a truly outstanding product: The Dreamcade 2.0 3-Sided Cocktail Arcade.

In addition to a larger monitor (21-inch) and adding a trackball, the Dreamcade 2.0 3-Sided Cocktail Arcade now features a menu system that not only lets you select the games, but also shows you what buttons to use while playing the game. Speaking of games, it now includes 145 legally licensed games, including all your favorites such as Pac-Man, Galaga, Centipede, Dragon's Lair, and Street Fighter.



Dream Arcades

\$1899

www.dreamarcades.com

Xbox 360 Arcade Stick

Fighter fans rejoice! Arcade-In-A-Box has released the first authentic arcade stick for the Xbox 360. Unlike offerings from other companies, this is a truly custom piece with authentic arcade hardware, and designed for the elite gamers looking for the ultimate gaming edge.

Custom options include convex or concave buttons and a variety of joysticks, including either "bat top" US style Magstick Plus, or "lollypop" Japanese-style Sanwa JLF joysticks. Gamers can even choose the button arrangement to best suit their favorite fighter game, including curved, straight, or Mortal Kombat's X plus one layout.

Additionally, Arcade-In-A-Box can print or design a custom overlay for your new arcade stick.

Arcade-In-A-Box

\$149 + options

www.arcadeinabox.com



Xbox 360 Arcade Edition

This console epitomizes the perfect balance between classic arcade gaming while presenting the best of the modern games available today. Plus, it won't break your bank!

The Arcade Edition features virtually everything that you would expect from your Xbox 360, but at a lower price, \$279, only \$20 more than the Nintendo Wii. While it doesn't include a hard drive, it does include a wireless controller, 256 megabyte memory unit, and game pack, featuring Pac-Man Championship Edition, UNO, Luxor 2, Boom Boom Rocket, and Feeding Frenzy.

If you have been holding out and waiting for a price drop, this is your chance to snap up a great console for modern arcade-style games like Virtua Fighter 5, Street Fighter 4, and awesome video games such as Halo 3 as well as classics and retro-remakes like the exceptional Pac-Man Championship Edition. Plus, with Xbox Live Arcade games like Street Fighter 2 HD, you can battle opponents on Live Arcade just like your remember in the real arcades of your childhood!

Microsoft Corp.

\$279 MSRP

www.xbox.com



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PinballSales.Com

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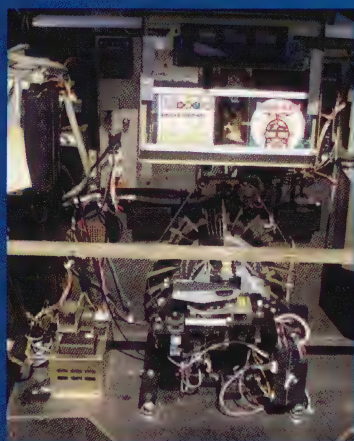
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Chicago Gaming Digital Bubbler

Classic Styling meets today's latest technology in this blast from the past that will look great in virtually any game room. Chicago Gaming has designed this bubbler based on the classic Model 1015.

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An ideal fusion of old-school style with new-school technology, the Digital Bubbler invokes the classic elegance of the past while embracing today's cutting-edge sound technology.

PinballSales.com

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Special Mention: The Nintendo Wii

When people consider what it means to have an ultimate home game room, a lot depends on age. To our parents it would be a couple of pins and a juke, to our kids it probably means a PlayStation 3 or an Xbox 360. To people my age (30's), it increasingly means bringing the out-of-home entertainment we enjoyed at the arcades to our home game rooms, and this includes things like Virtual Reality games such as MoCap Boxing, Brave Fire Fighters, shooters such as House of the Dead and arcade fighting games. While consoles have always tried to emulate the arcades, they have nearly always fallen flat: while graphics were "almost good enough," controllers and interfaces simply weren't up to the challenge.

That has all changed with the introduction of the Wii.

Even with just the Wiimote and Nunchaku controllers, the Wii brings the classic arcade game experience into the home with games such as House of the Dead 4 and new games that could have been seen in the arcades, such as Trauma Center. This fall (and into 2008) gamers will see a series of new control adaptors that are going to make the Wii an arcade machine of choice for your game room.

With additions like the Wii Zapper, Wii Balance Board, Wii Wheel, dance mats, and of course the Wii Guitar Hero guitar, arcade game fans will finally be able to enjoy out-of-home style gaming, at home, at a much more affordable price than having to buy an authentic arcade machine for each game. Oh yeah, and don't forget that the Wii Virtual Console also delivers a ton of our favorite childhood NES, SNES, N64, Sega Genesis, Turbo Grafx 16, and NEOGEO games right to your TV once again! The only thing missing is a series of classic console controllers to play these classic games ... oh yeah, our buddies at Retro USB (www.retrousb.com) are already working on that!

The Wii's perfect mix of old and new makes it the ultimate holiday gift for your game room this year.



Nintendo

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VGXPO 2007

Sometimes You Can't Go Home

by Mitch Gerson

The last few years (since 2003), I've looked forward to the event formerly known as Philly Classics each year. Back in 2004, it was announced that Philly Classics would be merging with VGXPO the next year and would take place at a new venue.

The venue changed to the Valley Forge Convention Center and the event started to "mature," from a hobbyist get together to featuring some more commercial vendors. I really enjoyed the flea market like atmosphere, but that was slowly being replaced over time with commercial vendors (ex. Atari). But the event was still fun to check out and thankfully there were still plenty of great vendors to chat with and purchase their homebrew games and other related retro-goodies.

It was with great anticipation that I was looking forward to this year's event that was supposed to be bigger and better than ever before. I'm unfortunately very unhappy to report that this year's event was a big let down (see David Ellis' article in the November GameRoom for his spot-on prediction).

The event took place in the Philadelphia, PA Convention Center (blocks from the Liberty Bell); and it felt as if the space chosen for the event swallowed it to the point that it felt horribly empty.

I saw many empty booths and diehards like myself wandering around looking for the vendors that in the past, had come back year after year. This year they didn't show (to be truthful there was one, but that's down from literally dozens of the past).

In their place were the likes of Dell, Subaru (yep, the car company), Phillips and other such companies. The event was much more like Digital Life Expo (a consumer electronics event that takes place here in NYC) than the classic gaming expo of the past.

A bright spot was the decent sized display of retro arcade games (about 75 machines) courtesy of Videotopia (www.videotopia.com); but even that wasn't enough to bring back the feel of the Philly Expo of the past.

I personally checked out all of the booths and was done within 15 minutes. After a pretzel & soda to drown my sorrows, and a quick chat with Jeff Anderson of Videotopia, I drove the 2 hours back home.

Sigh. I miss Philly Classics. **GR**



The one bright spot of VGXPO 2007:
Jeff Anderson and his Videotopia Display



PinExpo 2007

Pinball Player's Paradise

by Kevin Steele

The 23rd Annual Pinball Expo was once again held in Rosemont Illinois at the Wyndham O'Hare hotel, and I'm happy to report that it was a great time for all.

It was an especially wonderful experience for me, as I finally got to meet one of my personal heros, Eugene Jarvis (read all about my "geek moment" in my *Last Word* column on page 64). There were a number of pinball "superstars" wandering around, such as Pat Lawlor (who had a great presentation and fireside chat).

Attendance was down slightly this year, but the energy level remained high, especially in the PinBrawl and FlipOut tournaments. (I loved the 300-inspired theme this year: "This Is Pinbrawl! Prepare for Glory!") As always, the tournament area was packed during the competitions, and the cacophony of pins drowned out any chance for any sort of communication other than hand gestures.

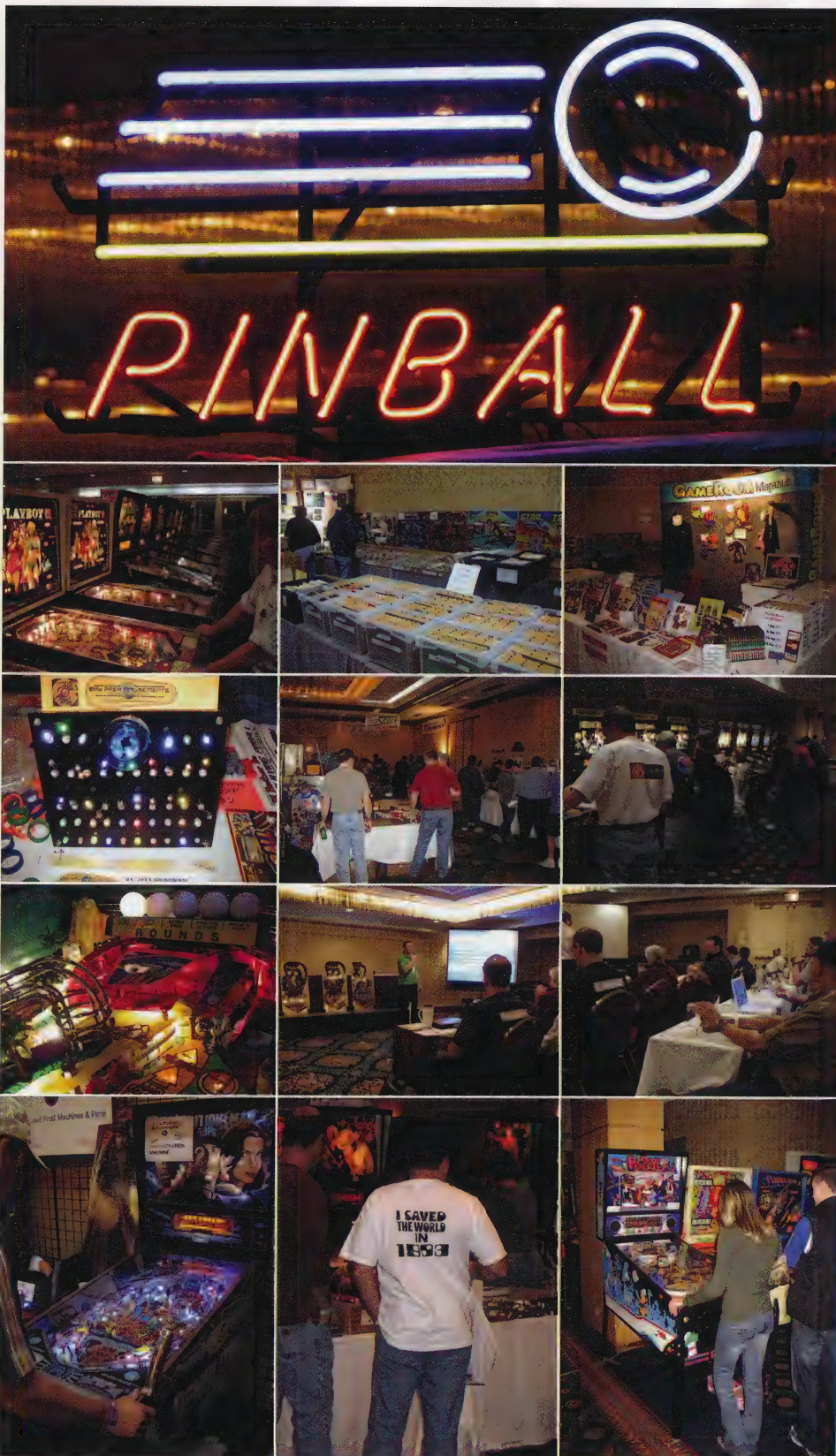
Luckily for myself and my store manager Jan Henshaw, our GameRoom booth was far enough away from the free play area so that you could actually talk to people (and talk I did—I lost my voice by Sunday morning, but I enjoyed talking to everyone who came to the booth!)

I was so busy talking to everyone that I never actually got a chance to play any pinball, even over four days, and there was a great selection of pinball machines in the free play area to choose from! (A special thanks for the chance to take some close up shots of your Tee'd Off pinball machine, Korn!)

It was a great chance for everyone to see new products, such as the pinball LED products from Bay Area Amusements. There were also a number of great pinball seminars, on everything from Rock 'n Roll in Pinball to a new technique for printing replacement art directly onto a pinball playfield.

The vendor's area was full, and this was a great opportunity to pick up some new parts or a new translite (or a subscription to GameRoom: a special thanks to all the new subscribers!)

Pinball Expo is truly a "Pinball Mecca"—if you're into pinball as a hobby, you really owe it to yourself to make the pilgrimage to Rosemont Illinois at least once in your life. It's an experience you won't soon forget! **GR**

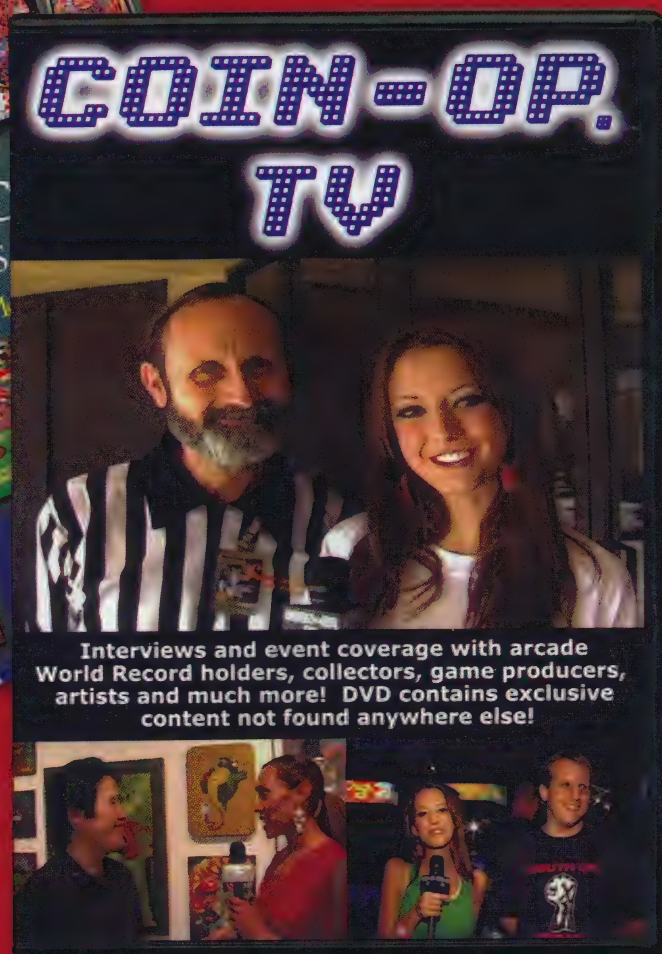
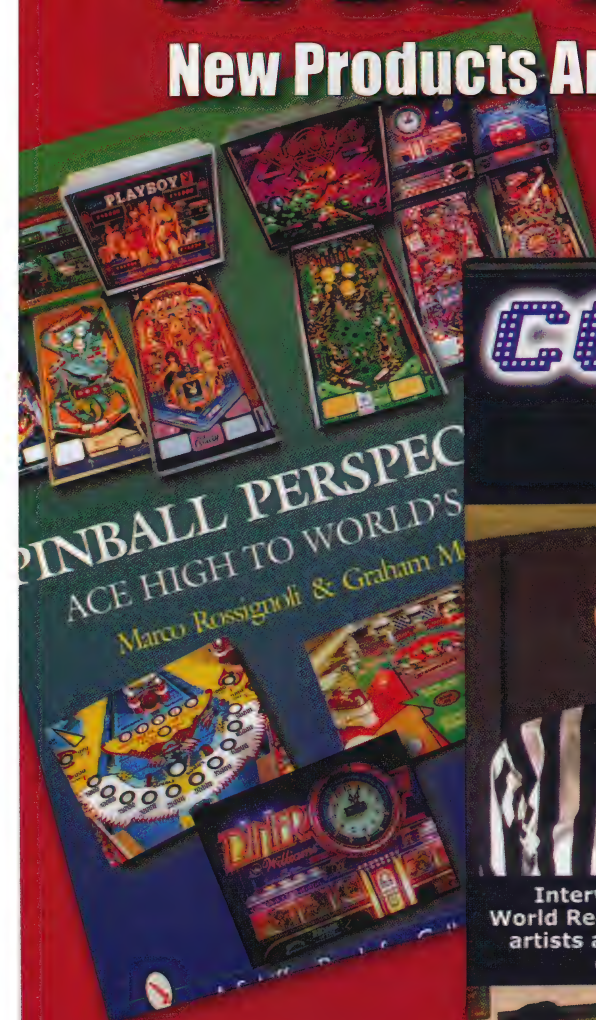


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Make Your Own Arcade Restoration Artwork

A How-To Guide

by Michael Ford

Part 4: Printing Your Artwork



Previously we have discussed how to scan and digitally restore your restoration arcade artwork, but once you have a perfect file on your computer... what next?

You have to print your new artwork out, and a home printer will not do the job. There are two ways to print artwork: You can buy the equipment and do it yourself, or take the artwork files to a sign printer or arcade specialty printer.

Using a Sign shop

Using your local sign shop is the easiest way and requires the smallest up-front cost. It's as easy as putting your new file on a CD-ROM and taking it to your local sign shop. They will look at the file and quote a price. Pricing varies widely, but you may catch a break if they can add your print to an existing job to fill out otherwise unused space. This may

or may not be expensive depending on your relationship with the sign shop.

You should take an example of what you want with you so the sign shop can see what you are expecting. It will help the sign shop to see what a CPO looks like if they have never seen a control panel overlay before. Very few sign shops can print directly on acrylic and none can print directly on glass. You will have to settle for a backlit sign placed behind clear acrylic or glass.

When submitting artwork to a sign shop, you will want to group similar pieces together. By placing all of your self-adhesive jobs (sideart and CPO's) in one big print job, you can save space and time by printing them together. Create a second job for marquees or translights because those would be printed on backlit material so light can shine through them. You pay for one large piece instead of

several small pieces. You can then cut them out yourself and save a lot of money. You will want to use this method even if you are printing on your own equipment to avoid wasting material.

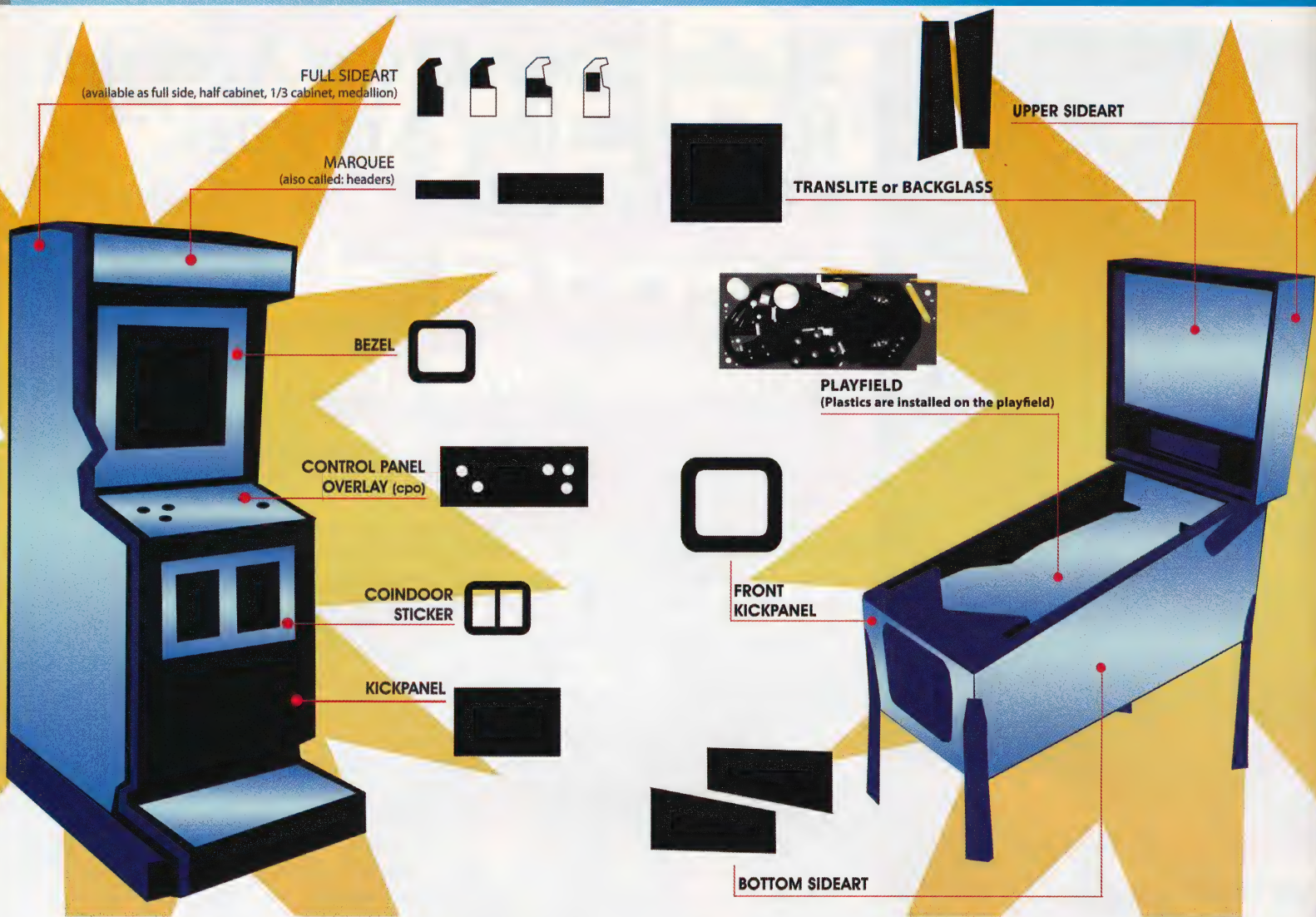
You may also consider having two prints made which can reduce the overall cost. Then you can sell the extra print to recover your printing costs.

You can also have a company that specializes in arcade artwork printing like mamemarquees.com print your artwork. They will already know what a Control Panel Overlay should look and feel like, or what material a marquee should be printed on.

Most people will choose to have a sign shop print their artwork. This is the



Apply Final Artwork
to your machine



least expensive option if you only need a few pieces printed. If you are a dealer who wants to produce in-house artwork, this may or may not be practical depending on how many pieces you need to produce and your Photoshop skills.

The benefit of using a local sign shop is that you have no out-of-pocket expense for equipment. The drawback is that you will pay more for each piece. When the sign shop quotes you a price, you can figure that their actual material cost is 10% to 25% of the price they quoted you. They must have this kind of a markup for the business to be profitable since most of their cost is in labor/overhead.

Up to this point I have only discussed real sign shops, not corner copy shops. The copy shop down the street may be capable of printing larger items but they have a one-size-fits-all mentality. They print on one material and you take it or leave it. Usually that material is glossy paper. They use one kind of ink and it is unlikely the operator even knows the difference between Dye and Pigment inks. Dye inks will fade over time. Pigment inks

will last much longer but they also do not produce as many colors, especially deep reds, or look as nice as Dye based ink.

The quality and competence of copy shop employees varies too much, plus they can be very expensive. A proper sign shop will have materials that will stand up over time, will not fade, and will be durable. Glossy paper may be an acceptable option for some home projects, but you will have to glue it to your cabinet as sideart or a control panel overlay. A sign shop can print on adhesive vinyl which will adhere without an exposed edge to wick in moisture.

Make sure you always have your prints laminated. Lamination is a thin, clear vinyl sheet covering the front of the artwork. This material not only protects the artwork from scratches and moisture, it alters the colors and makes them really pop. Glossy laminate looks the best but it is not truly original. A matte finish is more true to original sideart but when anyone compares glossy and matte sideart, they always pick glossy as the best looking. You can use the same laminate for a control panel but a thicker textured lami-

nate is preferred because it will give more protection and will not show scratches as easily. Most original CPO's used a textured covering to resist scratches. Regular glossy or matte laminate is suitable for home use.

Printing It Yourself

Printing your own restoration artwork requires special equipment which is out of the reach of the average person. You can print small items, like instruction stickers or button labels, on your home printer using self-adhesive sheets from the office supply store, then have them laminated, but you cannot print full side sideart. For larger items you need a big printer and a big laminator. Big printers are actually called Wide Format in the business, and they print from paper or vinyl rolls and instead of sheets. Among wide format printers, there are two types, Aqueous and Solvent. Aqueous inks are water-based and these print on paper. They can also print on self-adhesive vinyl but it requires a special coating which makes it expensive and the quality is not very good. Aqueous printers produce the highest quality prints. Solvent

ink is used by professional sign shops to print on vinyl materials. Solvents bite into the vinyl, making a permanent bond with the material. These are the same printers used to make the colorful vehicle signs and vehicle wraps you see on commercial cars and trucks. Solvent prints are usually meant to be viewed from a distance so the quality is not as good, but newer printers produce prints that rival Aqueous quality.

Arcade dealers, who need to restore games, may find it worthwhile to buy the equipment. They can then reproduce many items on demand, to the size needed, as well as custom artwork which can open up a new business opportunity. The minimum a dealer can expect to invest in an Aqueous printer and a laminator is \$7k–\$10k and a full service shop with both Aqueous and Solvent printers would be on the order of \$50k+. Many dealers may find they can get by with a smaller setup and a less expensive laminator, as long as they limit their size to 25 inch wide prints.

If you are restoring your own game, then a local sign shop is the best option to print your restoration artwork, and it will be the only economical option for small jobs. Some dealers may decide to purchase their own Aqueous printer and keep their production in-house. Either way, you will find you have opened a new door once you see how easy it is to create and produce custom and restoration graphics. You may soon find yourself looking for another cabinet to restore, once you know how much fun it is to see your work on a real cabinet.

Michael Ford
ClassicArcadeGrafix.com

Pinball Playfields at a Sign Shop?

Pinball playfield overlays are used to cover severely worn playfields. When you cannot touch-up the playfield and there are no replacements available, you may have to use an overlay. Have your playfield printed on self-adhesive vinyl, like sideart, but laminate with a 10 mil polycarbonate glossy, smooth laminate. This is a thick laminate that is similar to very thin acrylic. It is clear and very tough. Regular 3 mil laminate will work but is not as good and will not last as long. Your sign shop will charge a premium for this laminate because it is very expensive. Many people opt to have their playfield double laminated in regular glossy laminate and accept the fact that it will not last as long but will still look great.



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☐ 36-45
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Section 2: GameRoom Magazine

5) Favorite GameRoom columns?

(Rank Your Five Favorite Columns from 1 to 5)

☐ GameRoom Mailbox
☐ GameRoom News by Mitch Gerson
☐ Lost Arcade Classics by Kyle Snyder
☐ Tales of the Silverball by Rob Craig
☐ The Wayback Machine by David Ellis
☐ Restoring Arcade Artwork by Michael Ford
☐ The Many Incarnations of... by Jonathan Imberi
☐ I Remember Them Well... by Bruce Moyer
☐ TAFA Classic Arcade Flyer by Dan Hower
☐ Auction Watch by Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin
☐ GameRoom of the Month
☐ Coin-Op Confessions
☐ Scoreboards (IFPA and Twin Galaxies' Records)
☐ The Last Word by Kevin Steele

7) What would you like more of in GameRoom?

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LOST ARCADE CLASSICS

Alpine Ski (Taito, 1982)

by Kyle Snyder

Welcome back to the “Lost Arcade,” where, being video arcade historians, (archaeologists, should we say?), it’s time for us to examine another forgotten title from the game rooms of years past. Today’s selection... Taito’s Alpine Ski, a simple, yet addicting racing title that seriously tests the reflexes of even the best players.

I’m also peppering this article with quotes from the greatest 80’s teen angst dark comedy, “Better off Dead”. As you no doubt recall, a large basis of that film revolves around a skiing championship, so I figure its quotes will nicely compliment a review of the 1982 Taito arcade sleeper.

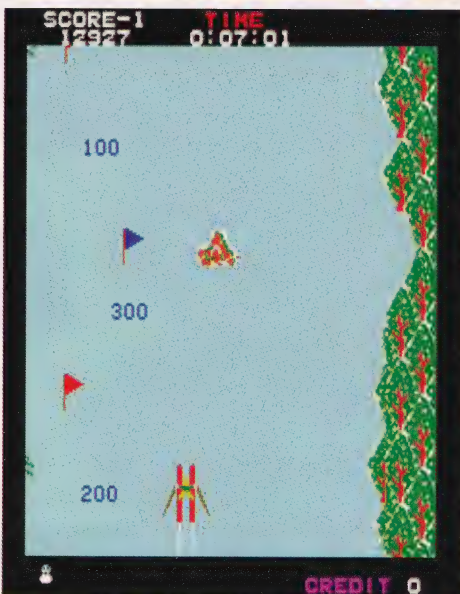
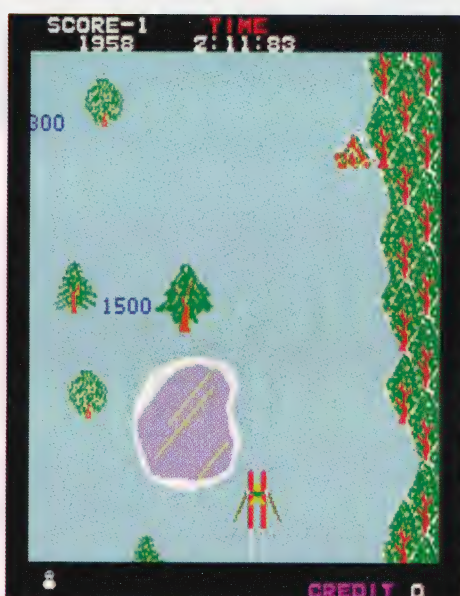
Each level of Alpine Ski presents three different skiing contests. The first screen is a downhill skiing simulation, which is followed by screen two’s slalom course, and then wrapping it all up is the third screen’s ski jump round. Completing these three screens brings you back to the downhill to do it all over again, and of course, increases the level of difficulty.

“Go that way, really fast. If something gets in your way, turn.” – Charles DeMar

As the first screen begins, the player is treated to a bird’s eye view of our skiing hero, clad in yellow (I never knew you could ski in a rainslicker), and sporting dark reddish brown skis. To create the illusion of traversing the slope, the skier is pointed north, and the obstacles scroll downward from top to bottom around him. Thus, he appears to be “downhill skiing”.

Tapping the joystick left or right angles the skier and boosts his speed a little bit. Pressing the button on the control panel also increases speed, no matter what direction the skier is pointed.

The player is given 2 minutes 30 seconds on the clock, and has to avoid obstacles such



as trees, boulders, other skiers, and snowmobiles. Colliding with an obstacle does not “take a reserve life” as in most games, in this case, it subtracts 10 seconds from the clock. This does not mean you should treat the skier as invulnerable. A few missteps are to be expected, but too many will eat up your time and make it impossible to finish the run. The skier is awarded roughly 80 points for every second he remains skiing... in other words, doesn’t crash.

Extra points appear on the course as blue numerals, and skiing directly over these digits adds their total to your score. I’ve found, however, that the collision detection between the skier and these point values seems a bit shaky. It seems to help if you move across the center of the numbers at a slight angle instead of skiing straight over them.

Generally speaking, these point values increase the closer they are placed to any hazards, from a low of 100 points, to a high of 1,000 points. Grabbing extra points is not absolutely necessary to complete the course, but keep in mind that if 10,000 points is achieved in the round, ten extra seconds will be added to the clock.

Big points are achieved for skiing across frozen ponds. Sliding across a pond and then grabbing the point values on the opposite side adds anything from 500 to 2,500 points. However, the icy surface may make the skier temporarily lose control and skid, threatening to send him careening into a tree or rock. This is the “white knuckle” moment of the game, and players will likely find themselves jamming the joystick in the opposite direction of the skid in a desperate attempt to right their path.

However, much like your driver’s ed teacher taught you, you should steer *into* the direction of the skid to regain control safely

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and quickly. Steering against the skid can make matters *much* worse.

Buck up little camper, we'll beat that slope together. – Charles DeMar

As the downhill course comes to an end, you'll notice a large empty patch of snow (no obstacles), followed by a small forest. The game automatically swooshes your skier to a stop before reaching the trees, and the slalom course starts shortly thereafter.

The slalom is very similar to the downhill run, with the added incentive of flags that must be navigated around to gain extra points. The flags appear either solo or in pairs, and clipping a flag deducts 100 points from your score. Solo flags need to be passed on the side where the numerals are located, and pairs of flags must be cleared by skiing between them. Clearing flags are worth a range of 100 to 1000 points, and as far as the pairs go, the closer they are positioned to each other, the higher the point value.

The frozen ponds are here once again, now with more treacherous rocks and trees surrounding them. Once again, higher point values on the opposite side will tantalize the hot shot arcader.

As the round begins, ten extra seconds are added to the clock, (provided that you scored 10,000 points on the previous screen), but that's only added to what was *left over* after the completion of the downhill run. So in other words, you need to complete *both* the downhill *and* the slalom in the initial two minutes and thirty seconds. This proves why earning extra time during the slalom for topping 10K is so critical!

If you choose to travel near the edge of the screen on either the downhill or slalom courses, you'll find the display follows your lateral movement somewhat. This is because the slope's playfield is "wider"

in the game's memory than what the monitor is actually displaying at any moment. The slope's extreme edges are marked with an impassible wall of trees, and no skier shall pass that boundary.

Look Charles, I gotta do this. If I don't, I'll be nothing. I'll end up like my neighbor Ricky Smith. He just sits around crocheting all day and snorting nasal spray. – Lane Myer

This brings us to the ski jump, the final screen in the level. This is a one shot deal, a moment of truth. Time to separate the men from the boys, and grab the bull by the horns. Put up or shut up, and do or die! (well, there are no "deaths" in this game, as this is a non-violent contest... but you know what I mean!)

The first thing you'll notice is the playfield has changed somewhat. The upper 25% of the screen now displays a side view of the ski jump platform, and the remainder of the screen shows a bird's eye view of the skier, just like in the previous courses.

The object here is to watch the skier as he makes his way down the ski jump (on the side view), then hit the speed button as he launches off the ramp (on the birds-eye view). Getting the timing right will maximize your bonus points in a range of 2,000-4,000 points.

Then it's a return to the downhill course, but as we are now on level two, the obstacles are more numerous, and placed so as to make skiing even more treacherous.

I think all you need is a small taste of success, and you will find it suits you. – Monique Junot

Although some may complain about the overall "sparseness" of the visuals, a screenful of mostly white communicates vast snowdrifts rather nicely, thank you. This is the perfect opposite of traditional

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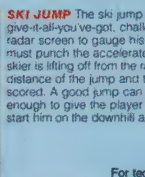
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DOWNHILL SKIING The chair lift carries the skier to the top of the slope for the downhill, the first competition, and the timer (adjustable) is set. The accelerate button starts the skier on the slick course. With the skier control and the accelerate button, the player must maneuver the skier around snow mobilers, beginner skiers, trees and dense woods, guiding him directly over the point values in order to collect them. Skimming the icy ponds can collect the largest values, but it also throws the skier into treacherous skids that put his reflexes, coordination and skill to the test. Each time the skier is knocked down, he loses 10 seconds of precious time in this race to the finish. Playing time is increased at 10,000 points (adjustable) and for each additional 5,000 points (adjustable) thereafter. Completing the downhill with time still remaining allows the player to challenge the slalom.



SLALOM RACE In addition to the challenges of the downhill course, the player must now ski between the flags in the slalom to collect points, with a score penalty for each pole he knocks down. Making it through the course with time to spare lets the player progress to the 3rd competition.



SKI JUMP The ski jump is a 1-time, give-it-all-you've-got, challenge. Using the radar screen to gauge his timing, the player must punch the accelerate button just as the skier is lifting off from the ramp to maximize the distance of the jump and the bonus points scored. A good jump can increase the score enough to give the player additional time and start him on the downhill again.

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early 80s "space" games, in which the background is typically solid black, and relies wholly on the game characters to deliver the visual splendour.

Alpine Ski's graphical charm is delivered via other skiers, (awkward beginners who tend to get in your way), large imposing boulders, clunky snowmobiles, and five distinctly different species of tree. The ponds are an appropriate ice blue color with diagonal stripes across their surface (representing skyward reflections) and are surrounded by a ring of white frost.

The opening sequence (seen after pressing the start button, but before the game begins proper) features a cute animation of skiers ascending a hill on a lift, while a happy jingly tune plays. This tune compares very favorably to the opening jingles of other titles from "the class of '82" such as Super Pac-Man, Time Pilot, and Dig Dug.

The attract mode features a charming and effective image of snowfall, from which bright white letters spelling out "Alpine Ski" rise from the snow itself.

The background music is upbeat as to be expected, and it reminds me of the type of tune that would accompany a circus "clown car" as it drives around, then comes to an

abrupt halt and spills out way too many clowns for that little Volkswagen.

The sound heard when hitting an obstacle recalls the typical "wrong answer" buzzing effect used in a lot of classic tv game shows, and it makes for a humorous accompaniment to the image of the skier tumbling head over heels into the snow. The swoosh of the snow when adjusting your skier's angle and the screeching sound when sliding across the ponds are well done as well.

I think I just froze the left half of my brain! Look! I can't move my right arm! – Charles De Mar

Despite its wintery setting, Alpine Ski is rooted in the overhead racing game genre best typified by games like Sega's Monaco GP (1980) and going back as far as 1975 with titles like Atari's Hi-Way, and Midway's Racer, and Wheels driving games.

Alpine Ski was released in the standard Taito cabinet of the era, sporting generic Taito side art. The overall color and the Taito logo itself on the side of the cabinet were cast in a soft blue, which was accented with black stripes. This is a more visually appealing combination that the rather garish two-tone green color scheme of the Jungle King / Jungle Hunt cabinet, or the uninspired

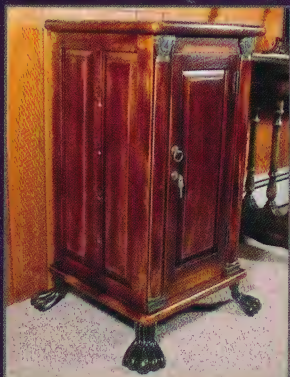
blandness of the grey and black Qix.

Although the cabinet is very sparse in terms of artwork, the marquee features a cute touch, in a layer of snow that has accumulated on top of the Alpine Ski logo itself.

Interestingly, Taito also released a "sister title" in 1983 called Water Ski, released only in Japan. Water Ski challenged the player to guide a water skier (makes sense, right?) around obstacles and over point values in the time allotted. It plays like a remake of Alpine Ski, and also like a "bird's eye view" version of earlier Lost Arcade Classic subject Tropical Angel.

According to the September 1982 issue of RePlay Magazine, Alpine Ski's United States debut was in April of 1982. However, the copyright date on the owner's manual states 1981, and advertising flyers for the Japanese release list "1982-1" as the copyright year. I suspect that the game was released very late in '81 in Japan, and then imported to America months later.

So, until we make our next trip back into the "Lost Arcade", keep searching out those obscure titles that didn't get much love the first time around. You may just find your new favorite. Have a wonderful holiday season, and "Mercy Buckets" for reading! **GR**



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by David Ellis



An Arcade That Fits Under Your Christmas Tree

In past installments of *The Wayback Machine*, I've talked about how bringing the arcade experience home was one of the driving forces in the home video game market of the 70s and early 80s. As arcades started springing up everywhere and every 7-11, K-Mart, and hotel lobby sported at least a couple of coin-op games, it became obvious to manufacturers of home video games that it would be a solid marketing move to find a way to emulate popular coin-op games in a domestic setting. What kid wouldn't want to wake up on Christmas morning and find out that he no longer had to go to the arcade to get a fix on his favorite game?

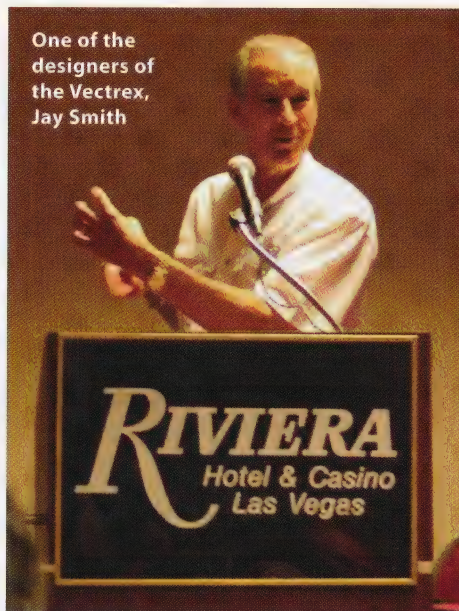
Not surprisingly, the first company to succeed in the home market was Atari. Although they had to resort to marketing the game in the Sears sporting goods department, the original Pong console was a huge hit—so huge that, within a year or so of its release, every company imaginable was riding on the coattails of Atari's success.

Atari continued its dominance in the home market by aggressively licensing most of the biggest arcade hits of the day for the Atari 2600. While companies like Mattel and Coleco were forced to scrounge for B-list coin-op titles, Atari was pumping out hit after hit. Games like *Asteroids*, *Centipede*, *Missile Command*, and *Defender* to name a few were released exclusively for the 2600 (at least at first), making that system the hands-down winner of the first video game console war.

The problem was that the 2600 just didn't have the power to accurately recreate coin-op games. The release of *Pac-Man*—a truly dreadful adaptation of the game—drove this fact home. Other systems, like ColecoVision, did a much better job, but the games still fell short of the originals graphics-wise.

Today, the graphics of home video game

systems are, in many cases, far superior to those of their arcade counterparts, so younger gamers have never experienced the frustration of the home version of a game not living up to the arcade version. But the fact is that, even in the 80s, there was a home video game system that was able to produce graphics that were identical to coin-op games. Unfortunately, the video game crash ensured that this amazing system never had the chance to catch on.



The game console in question is, of course, the Vectrex, which was designed by a company called General Consumer Electric (GCE). Originally released in 1982, Vectrex was vastly different from other home systems on the market. The most obvious difference was that, instead of connecting to a television and displaying raster graphics, Vectrex was self-contained. It sported a built-in 9" black-and-white vector monitor that could be fitted with overlays that provided games with playfield graphics and/or color (much like

many early black-and-white coin-op games).

To arcade enthusiasts, the possibilities of this system were exciting. Vectrex had the processing power and the display to allow it to play games identical to vector coin-op games. The console shipped with a built-in game called *Mine Storm* that was an unabashed clone of *Asteroids* (and arguably more fun). A couple of the shipped cartridge titles also showed off the console's abilities. *Armor Attack* was almost identical to the arcade version. This was also the case with *Star Castle*, a game that was available exclusively on the Vectrex.

At the 2007 Classic Gaming Expo, one of the creators of the Vectrex, Jay Smith, talked about the development of the most unique video game console ever created.

"The Vectrex itself started one time at lunch when some of our programmers and designers... went to an Army Navy surplus store," he said. "They brought back a one-inch diameter CRT... an old instrumentation unit from an airplane. They said, 'wouldn't it be great if we could put a little game on that CRT—maybe a handheld game or something.'"

After a couple of months of discussion, and a few more trips to the surplus store, Jay and company came up with a product they called Mini-Arcade. The idea was a vector-scan game on a five-inch CRT. They sold the project to Kenner Toys. After about three or four months, however, Kenner decided they didn't want to compete in the video game arena.

"We then took it down the street to GCE," Smith said. "We had done a game watch for them and a game calculator, and we said, 'how about this?'"

GCE loved the idea and decided to present the game at the June, 1982 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) and get it into



The fact is that, even in the 80s, there was a home video game system that was able to produce graphics that were identical to coin-op games. Unfortunately, the video game crash ensured that this amazing system never had the chance to catch on.

stores for Christmas of 1982.

"We said 'sure, why not?' Develop a whole game system, twelve games and so forth, in nine months? Piece of cake."

During the research and development period, the product that would become Vectrex went through a number of changes. The first was an increase in screen size from five inches to nine inches.

"This was a black-and-white [tube] resourced in the Orient for eight or nine dollars," Smith said. "It turns out that was cheaper than a five-inch screen and cheaper than a fifteen-inch screen, so this was the ideal thing to get it into the price range."

According to Smith, there were a number

of factors behind the decision to go with a vector monitor rather than a raster-scan monitor.

"Two words: zoom and rotate," Smith said. "If you remember back then, [with raster-scan] how do you make an object larger? You pull up another object from the memory and put it in there. How do you rotate it? You pull up another object from the memory. In vector-scan, you just tweak some numbers. It was wonderful! And also, there were a number of outstanding games out there—not the least of which was *Asteroids*—[that were] showing all those things really well. And, besides, it was different."

The use of vector-scan rather than raster-

scan also enabled Vectrex to get around paying a licensing fee that all other video game systems were required to pay. Ralph Baer and Magnavox had a patent on the video game, and the key to that patent was collision detection.

"You really can't have much of anything if you don't get two objects together," Smith said. "Whether you're batting them, swatting them, steering them on a road... anything, you have to know when two objects are there. There's only one [home] video game system that was ever done that was not covered by that patent and that was Vectrex—because it wasn't in a raster-scan video system, it was a vector-scan."

Of course, the vector monitor did pose some difficulties. One big problem was displaying text for instruction screens. Every letter consists of a lot of individual lines. Vector technology is such that a line starts to fade after about 20 milliseconds. So, when a lot of text is required, the number of lines that have to be drawn and redrawn to display the text is prohibitive. The team was forced to come up with a creative solution.

"Two of the key guys in this whole project [were] Jerry Carr and John Ross," said Smith. "One of the schemes [Jerry] came up with was to draw a raster-scan little box for text. He drew seven lines, and turned the beam on and off, and you could put text out on that line. That way, you only drew seven lines instead of 23 or 123 for a line of text."

The developers also got creative about the monitor's electronics. A person familiar with vector monitors who opens up a Vectrex will see a number of interesting differences in how the monitor is put together.

"In a regular CRT, the beam just goes back and forth," Smith explained. "We built our own high voltage system to be able to control the beam a little bit differently for the vector-scan system."

"We also put different coils around the TV tube to control the movement of the beam. The regular CRT raster-scan has to go sideways at a very monotonous back and forth rate, but it doesn't go up and down and pause and move all over. So we developed... our own coils...to move the beam to our specifications."

There were, of course, other technical considerations as well. One was which processor to use. The team settled on the Motorola 6809.

"There was a lot of considerations about Intel processors, Motorola processors, which version of the Motorola processor, and what would have the longest life after we started. Which we could add on and do the most things with," Smith recalled. "It turned out to be a great choice."

The 6809 processor allowed the team to incorporate digitized voice, something that wasn't at all common at the time. The Vectrex game Spike was one of the first talking home video games.

The team also had to make a decision as to how they would ship the included game—as a separate cartridge or to build it into the unit itself. It turned out to be cheaper to do the latter. So, the Vectrex shipped with a built-in 8K ROM—4K for the operating system, and 4K for Mine Storm.

The prototype for the Vectrex and the first

twelve games were completed on schedule, and were presented at the 1982 summer CES as planned, and the Vectrex was in stores by Christmas.

With Vectrex successfully launched, Jay Smith and his team went to work immediately on plans for a follow-up system. They all agreed that their focus should lie in moving the Vectrex from black-and-white to color.

"We scratched our heads, and we worried and wondered," he said. "Even then, they were essentially doing the razor and blades thing—they were losing money... selling the base unit, or certainly not making any money, and trying to make it up in all the cartridges."

With cost in mind, the first thing the team did was look at a color tube, but the price was prohibitive—at least three times as expensive as the black-and-white tube. It also had three times the electronics inside. They



quickly determined that a true color monitor was impractical. That didn't stop them, however.

"We looked at the regular black-and-white tube that we had and thought, 'well, what happens if you put two layers of phosphor on the tube?'" he said.

On a black-and-white tube, there is a layer of white phosphor. When the electron beam hits it, a white line is produced. Instead of this, Smith's team instructed the tube manufacturer put on a layer of red phosphor, let it dry, and then put a layer of green phosphor over that. The theory was that, by varying the power of the electron gun, the beam could be made to go through one layer and hit another—thus producing different colored lines.

"We put one together and, sure enough, it worked," he said. "So, right near the end of the run, we produced a Vectrex that could do green lines, red lines, and something in-between depending on where the power of the electron beam was."

"Now, the limitation on that is that, to control the power... 18,000 or 16,000 volts... and rapidly switch between the two was quite a trick. At best you could switch sort of fast between the two. So you would start out drawing a line and it would be green, and you would switch...to a red line and it would slowly go along the line from red to green. But it got there. Created the effect. Pretty neat."

Unfortunately, although a prototype color unit was completed (and, in fact, still exists), it never made it to the marketplace. Vectrex hit the market at a very volatile time. Shortly after the console was introduced, Milton Bradley purchased GCE. The toy giant added to the library of games (there were approximately 30 games total produced for the console) as well as 3D goggles and a light pen attachment. None of these factors could fight the downturn of the video game industry, however.

"In '83 and '84, the whole video game industry collapsed in on itself," said Smith. "Too many terrible games [with] no money-making opportunity at all. And... this was new to the retail trade. They dealt with board games, and cards, and things like that. Electronic things were always kind of scary to them anyway, so when the sales began to fail they said, 'oh, that's it—electronics is over,' and went on to the next [thing]."

I can still remember when I first saw the Vectrex on the shelf at the local Toys-R-Us. I was enthralled by it. My dream of having real arcade games in my home was sitting there on the shelf, just waiting for me to buy it. But I held off. Even then, I could see what was happening to the industry, and I figured I'd get bored of a video game system that wasn't being supported with new games.

I did, however, treat myself to a Vectrex (courtesy of eBay) a few years back, and purchased a multi-cart containing all of the games available for the system on one cartridge. Even now, Vectrex is one of the coolest game systems ever made, and the games are still incredibly fun. I highly recommend the console—it's a great addition to any classic video game collection. Even if all of your other classics are coin-operated, you could do worse than to find this little arcade-in-a-box under your Christmas tree this year. Even if you have to put it there yourself. **GR**

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The San Diego Pinball Museum

A Very Special Coin-Op Confession

by Steve Yerkes



I started playing pinball in 1962 at the age of eight. I liked to bowl and I pestered my father to take me to the new “modern” bowling alley that just opened up in Sumner, Washington. We walked in and the place was big, clean, and inviting, far different from the dingy alley in downtown Puyallup. Something with lots of color caught my eye in the corner, and I asked my dad what it was. He said, “Son, it’s a pinball machine.” I completely forgot about bowling and had to look this strange object over. It only cost a nickel to play, and I was hooked. I remember the wood, the small flippers, that neat bumper that would rise up and down in the playfield, that big oil derrick, and the large red car with the fins on the backglass. After that first day I asked my dad over and over to go to the ally to play the pinball. From time to time he reluctantly took me there and was bored to death while I played that game. As I think back on those times, it brings a tear to my eye that my dad would spend a lot of his valuable time taking me there. He hated pins and bowling, but he did it for me.

A year later I met a local kid that had a pinball in his basement. I think he heard me



talking about pinball to one of my friends, and he invited me over to play his game. I was awestruck that anyone would have such a device at their home. I only remember going to his house one time, but I had a great time playing his pinball. It was all wood, and had this amazing ability to spit lots and lots of balls onto the playfield. It also had this dancer on the backglass. It was quite different than the other game I played.

Over the years, I would play any pinball that I would see if I had change in my pocket. I thought they were wonderful devices.

When I went away to college in Idaho in 1972, I had a little more disposable income. The drinking age was only 19, and I spent quite a bit of time in the local bars. Much to my surprise, most of the bars had at least six pinball machines. What's more, instead of a replay, they had the games wired up to light a lamp on the top of the game that awarded the player a free beer token. I thought this was great stuff. While I thought my skill level was slightly above average (I could win a token about every third time I played) one of my roommates won virtually every time he played. It was wonderful. My study schedule allowed me to go to the bars to play pinball on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

In 1976, I moved to San Diego to go to graduate school. The time that I had available to play pinball significantly decreased. I would play if I had the time, but only rarely. I met my wife to be, Ginny, in 1978, and after introducing her to pins she liked to play pinball as well. We would go to the local "tilt" arcade and play "doubles". One person would take the left flipper, and the other would take the right. We would play off and on for the next few years, but never seriously.

When I finally graduated from school and joined the work force, my time to play pins virtually dried up. I do not remember playing much of anything from about 1981 to 1993. I missed a generational change in pinball during that time. In 1994, for some reason, I decided that I should buy a pin and keep it at home. I checked the local papers, and purchased a Williams Dealers Choice. I had a great time playing it for one week. Then it stopped dead. I soon realized that unless I learned how to work on a pinball machine, I could not very well have any at home. I discovered Steve Young at the pinball resource, and learned quite a bit from him. I purchased the schematic for the game, and then dove in.

The problems with Dealers Choice were not that bad. I got it fixed fairly quickly, and I got the bug to buy another game. Two turned into three and so on.

Top to bottom: Pins from the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's



I often thought about the two games that I first played, and started to buy some books about pinball machines. I found out that the first game was Williams Gusher, and the second was Bally Balls A Poppin'. I decided that I was going to try to find and then buy those games. I luckily found a very nice Gottlieb Lady Luck and a United Major League Baseball that were for sale locally. I absolutely loved playing those games. It became apparent very quickly that I loved virtually any old pinball machine, and started buying anything that I could find. Some of the games that I purchased were not very interesting to me, and I fixed them up and sold them. That money allowed me to purchase other games.

I found that most people liked EM machines manufactured after 1970, and they preferred SS machines when given the choice. That was fine with me. I would generally keep any game older than 1970, and I was particularly interested in space-themed or animated games. I quickly had over 180 games, and had them stored all over the place. Approximately 40 are for sale, and the balance are my personal collection.

After talking with Tim Arnold about the thought of displaying my games, I started thinking about buying a commercial building in downtown Escondido, California so that I could display my games. At the same time, a rental house that we own was ransacked by a deadbeat tenant. It turned out that if one amortized the losses from that tenant, coupled with the savings in storage fees, I could display the games in our house for several years at the same relative cost. My wife was willing to let us take that loss, and the *San Diego Pinball Museum* was born. A good friend of mine, Franz, has agreed to let me display the games that I wish to sell at his business.

There are 100 games on display at the museum. They are generally arranged in chronological order, and I have an information card with each of the games describing the name of the game, the date it was made, special items about the game, and so on. They have all been cleaned and shopped, and for the most part they all work.

I have about 11 pre-flipper games, 35 flipper wood rails, 44 metal rails, and about 10 games that are newer than 1970. They range in the date of manufacture from 1933 to 1989. I have a couple of arcade games including Computer Space, and I do have a Gusher and a Balls A Poppin' in the display.

Anyone is welcome to visit the museum, but you must email me at astscy@aol.com so that I can arrange a time that will fit both of our schedules. **GR**

Top to bottom: Pins from the early, mid, and late 60's



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GameRoom Magazine's

GameRoom of the Month

by Eric Strangeway



I always get comments from readers who tell me "I'd love to submit my game room, but it's so small. Well, as Eric Strangeway aptly demonstrates, it's not the size that matters. Congrats on a great GameRoom of the month!"

I purchased my first pinball machine, a Bally Twilight Zone, about 3 ½ years ago in February of 2004. I had graduated from college six months earlier and moved from Milwaukee, WI to Oshkosh, WI, a city of 60,000 people and about 100 miles north of home. I found myself thinking about how I used to enjoy pinball and wondering if there were any local arcades to play pinball. I scoured the local bars and laundromats with mixed results at best.

Then it hit me: I could probably afford to buy my own pinball machine! I started searching the Internet and found Twilight Zone for sale about 60 miles away. I also stumbled upon the Mr. Pinball collector's register and met Herb and Marty, a couple of local pin-heads. I told them of my plans to buy a Twilight Zone and they warned me that I wouldn't be able to just own one. I chuckled to myself because I thought I would



be more than satisfied to have one pinball.

A few days after meeting Marty and Herb, I picked up Twilight Zone and I realized that I had been bit by the pinball bug and had pin-fever. Within a month, I bought a Gottlieb Sinbad project from Herb and after two more months, I had a Cybernaut, Blackwater 100, Baby Pac-man, Mr. and Mrs. Pac-man, and a Star Trek: The Next Generation, all projects in need of repair.

I am quite fortunate to have a degree in Electrical Engineering that gives me a good background for pinball machine circuit board repair. My main pinball interests are in solid-state pinball machines from 1977 to the present. I really enjoy repairing early solid-state games from Bally and Williams. They are simultaneously frustrating and rewarding. I feel a great sense of accomplishment when I repair an old pinball machine that hasn't worked in 10 or 15 years and can bring it back to life.

I bought my house a little over two years ago. I had five pinball machines in my two-bedroom apartment and it was getting pretty cramped. I wanted to find a house with a large basement that I could finish into my dream gameroom. On the first day with the real estate agent, the second house we looked already had the finished basement I was looking for and the rest is history.

I have a pretty eclectic taste in pinball machines, but my main interest is in solid-state pinball machines. My current gameroom line-up includes: Twilight Zone, Star Trek: The Next Generation, Doctor Who, Rocky and Bullwinkle, Funhouse, Time Machine, Haunted House, Sinbad, Stars, Baby Pac-man, Gorgar, Flash, Defender, Royal Flush Deluxe, and a custom Three Stooges pinball machine that I have been working on. I also have a Pole Position arcade game, a Rowe-AMI jukebox that has a CD changer kit, and a Pub Time Dart machine.

I decorated the walls with pennants for my favorite sports teams, the Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee Brewers. I also have framed MAD magazines from the late fifties/early sixties. I have always been a fan of MAD and really liked the classic covers by Norman Mingo and Kelly Freas.

I consider myself to be a pretty lucky guy. I think every kid dreams about having an arcade at home and it became a reality for me. I am also very lucky to have a very understanding and supportive fiancé, Amy, and a lot of local pin-head friends. I have a website where you can see more pictures and get more information at: http://webpages.charter.net/strange218/pinball_website.htm



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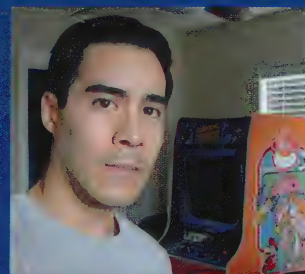
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GameRoom Reviews

Dragon's Lair

The HD-DVD Edition

by Digital Leisure

Price: \$49.95

www.digitalleisure.com

Prettier, and Just as Deadly

"Dragon's Lair: the fantasy adventure where you become a valiant knight on a quest to rescue the fair princess from the clutches of an evil dragon."

That might sound like the intro to a lame Saturday morning cartoon, but for many arcade kids out there the arrival of Dragon's Lair (and its lame intro voice-over) is a landmark memory. Seemingly out of nowhere, a game of a completely higher caliber landed at their local gaming haven and despite costing 50¢ per game, players unloaded their pocket-money. Dragon's Lair took arcades by storm; it was so successful that I've heard tales of arcade operators installing additional monitors above the cabinet, so the crowds waiting for their chance to play could watch in awe. Looking back and comparing Dragon's Lair to its contemporaries, it is still hard to believe that this game was in arcades back in 1983.

Dragon's Lair was the first laserdisc videogame. Created by classical feature film animator Don Bluth and programmer Rick Dyer, to many it's seen as an interactive movie rather than a videogame because, well, just look at it! For those unfamiliar with how Dragon's Lair plays (hang your heads in shame), here's a quick rundown... As the game starts the player is treated to an atmospheric scene showing Dirk (our hero) approaching a menacing looking castle. Almost immediately the player is presented with a threat—Dirk falls through the broken drawbridge and is about to be eaten by an unseen tentacled monster. At points such as this the player must push the joystick in an appropriate direction or push the action button in order to resolve each situation. The first two scenes (the drawbridge and the inner corridor) always play in sequence, however, once you get past the corridor things get a little hectic; the game chooses which scenes to play at random so you're never sure what's coming up next. This random element means the player must be ready for

any sequence at any time. To help determine what to do in some circumstances, the player is given a visual hint, such as a brief flash of an object or door. Other sequences, however, offer no hints and the player must figure out what to do either by trial and error and a lot of quarters.

Since its arcade release various companies have brought Dragon's Lair to the home gaming market as the systems developed throughout the years. Coleco snapped up the home rights to it and it has appeared in one form or another on Coleco Adam, Commodore 64, NES, Amiga, Sega CD and even the GameBoy has seen a little Princess Daphne action. None of these versions could have hoped to hold a candle to the original, and only with the more recent PC and DVD versions (the remastered 20th Anniversary DVD in particular) we've started to see the game devolve back to its original quality. According to the interview segments included on the disc, only now has a format emerged that truly does Dragon's Lair justice in Don Bluth's eyes. This is Dragon's Lair High Definition.



I remember playing the game's Amiga home computer conversion and thinking how incredible it looked. For its era, the Amiga offered some really lush graphics and sound capabilities that made Dragon's Lair much more faithful to the arcade laserdisc version than any previous console or computer. Instead of attempting to recreate the interactive movie, most 8-bit conversions decided to switch the gameplay to a platformer. With the Amiga version players were given a teemingly arcade-perfect conversion of the laserdisc—all on nine 720kb floppy discs. Thanks to a split-screen Time Capsule segment on the HD-DVD, my memories of the "dazzling" Amiga version of the game are now shattered! The Time Capsule uses the game's final scene to illustrate how the game's visual quality has progressed during its many format conversions. So contrary to my rose-tinted memories, the Amiga version now reminds me of an animated mosaic rather than a crisp and fluid classical animation masterpiece.

Digital Leisure has gone one step beyond for this HD-DVD (and Blu-Ray) release.

Each frame has been restored meticulously. Instantly you can tell that dust and scratches that made it into the original film and its consequent re-masters have been wiped out. Initially I didn't think that the high definition version was all that superior to the 20th Anniversary DVD version. However, looking at both versions playing side by side in the Time Capsule segment, it's clear that Digital Leisure has really taken full advantage of the immense picture quality that the high definition formats offer. Background layouts that once looked a little blurry are remarkably sharper, blocks of color are more vivid, gradients blend more smoothly, lines are "highly" defined and give the whole picture a more solid feel. The original mono soundtrack has also been given a new lease on life; the sound engineers have done an excellent job at developing it into Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, which sounds great coming out of a surround sound system but hasn't distorted the original sound in any way. These video and audio enhancements add great atmosphere to the game.

The HD-DVD gameplay is identical to that of the original laserdisc version; albeit without the "flicker" that the original experienced as the game jumped between video sequences in the arcade. As with the DVD version, controls translate from the arcade's 4-way joystick and button to a DVD remote control's directional buttons as if it were always meant to be.

One area that I feel the HD-DVD is lacking in is its special features. There is a lot of extra footage, TV spots, documentaries and other fanboy material that has been featured in past DVD releases but has been dropped for this release. Perhaps the degraded TV archive footage didn't meet quality standards when seen alongside the high definition content, but it would have been nice to see. The Interview with Don Bluth, Rick Dyer and producer Gary Goldman does reveal several interesting tidbits (most interesting are the conflicts between programming animation teams and mention of Playboy's influence over Princess Daphne's curves). The Video Commentary runs through every scene in the game with a picture-in-picture frame of the creators discussing the game. For the most part, this Video Commentary seems to be a continuation of the aforementioned Interview; they don't go into any great detail about most individual scenes and it might have been nice to see some animatics here instead of showing Don, Rick and Gary sitting there watching a monitor.

Another noteworthy alteration is that the



original frames have been cropped from their 4:3 aspect. The very top and bottom areas of the original frames are not seen as a result, however this was a necessary evil to fit the game into the now standard HDTV 16:9 screen aspect. I don't feel that this detracts from the game in any way, but it might disappoint some of the die-hard Dragon's Lair fans

out there.

The outstanding quality of the game itself eclipses all these minor gripes. If you're a Dragon's Lair fan and need an excuse to add an HD-DVD or Blu-Ray player to your game-room's Christmas list—this is what you've been waiting for!

— Paul Murphy

TILT: The Battle to Save Pinball

The Creation of Pinball 2000

by Greg Maletic

Price: \$29.95, available from GameRoom

www.gameroommagazine.com

A Failed Success

Few things are more inspirational than a last stand: a few men, knowing their fate is probably sealed, nevertheless fight on, sometimes snatching victory from the jaws of defeat... and sometimes not. Still, it's the battle that's important, the courage to stand and fight for what you believe in, no matter how desperate the odds.

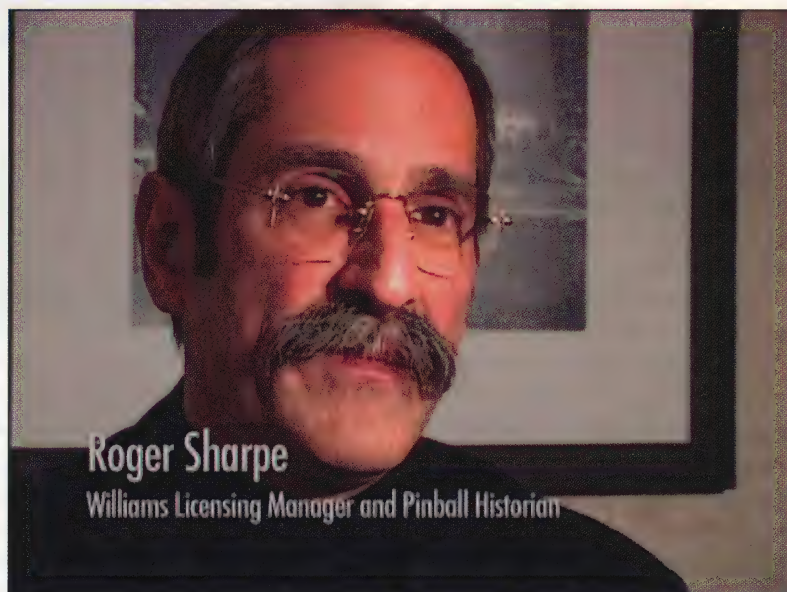
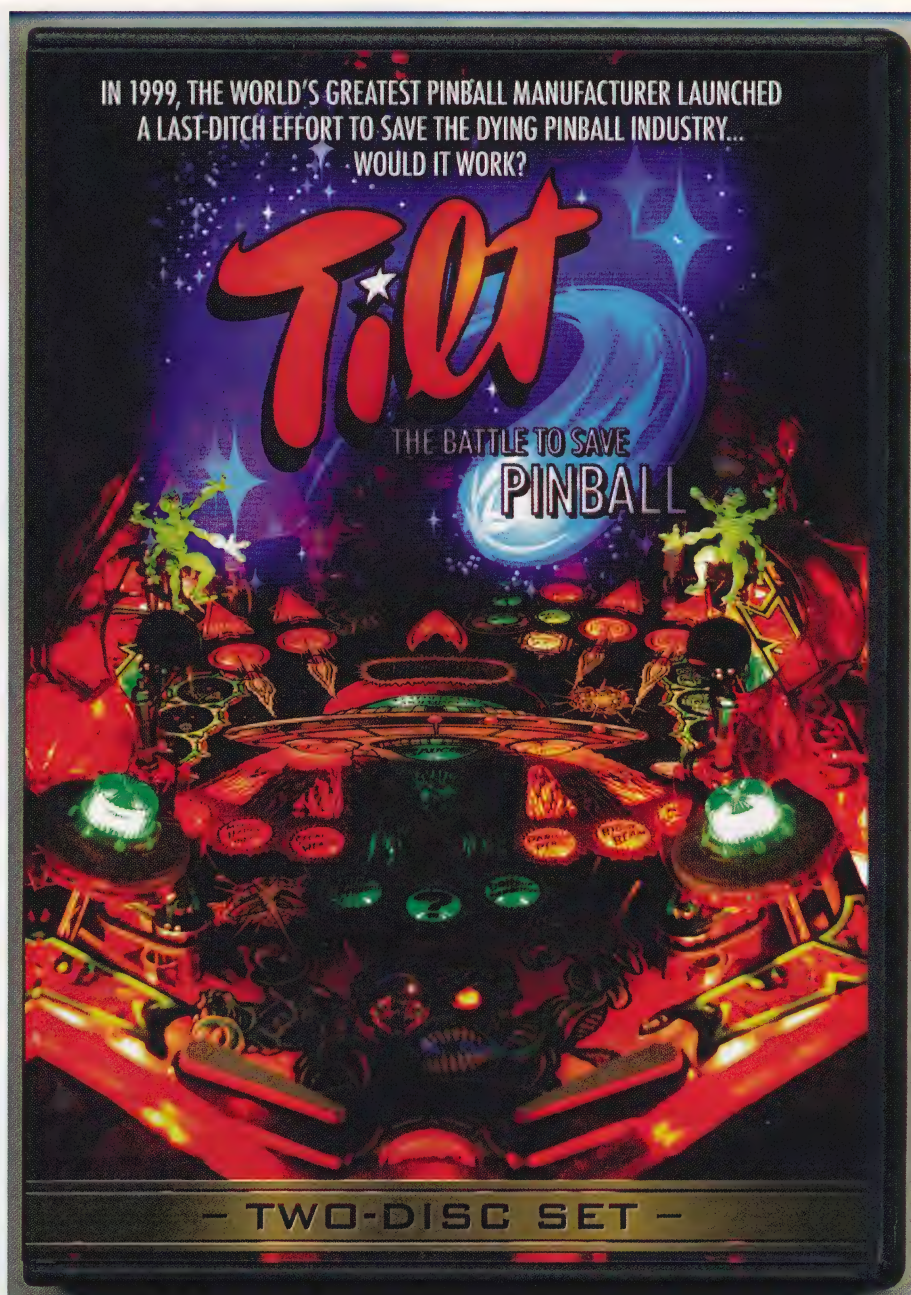
For Williams' Pinball Division, that last stand came in 1998. Faced with a declining pinball market, and a company that was seeing far more profit from easily made slot machines, Williams' pinball division was given an ultimatum: reinvent pinball, create the greatest game ever designed, and do it in 18 months. The stakes? The fate of the entire pinball division. Their secret weapon? A revolutionary new system called Pinball 2000, which fused videogaming and pinball into a unique new hybrid. Did it work? I won't spoil the entire saga, but let me vaguely summarize: they succeeded beyond their wildest expectations. And they failed beyond their worst fears.

Producer Greg Maletic has created a masterful documentary of this last stand, of what can basically be summarized as a battle to save an entire industry (Williams had 80% of the pinball market). Through interviews with the people involved, including designers George Gomez, Pat Lawlor, Larry DeMar, and others, Maletic pieces together exactly what happened in the last days of pinball at Williams.

The DVD is a special two disc set, and in addition to the 60-minute documentary it includes nearly 8 hours of additional bonus content, from additional interviews to footage of never-released Williams machines, commentary, and much more. The production values are top-notch, and the information presented almost overwhelming.

TILT: The Battle to Save Pinball is an engrossing story, and a fascinating glimpse into the creative process. You can sense the desperation in these designers, but Maletic aptly demonstrates that, put into a hopeless situation, this was truly their finest hour.

— Kevin Steele



Mr. Pinball Pinball List and Price Guide 2008

by Daina Pettit

Price: \$19.95, available from GameRoom

www.gameroommagazine.com

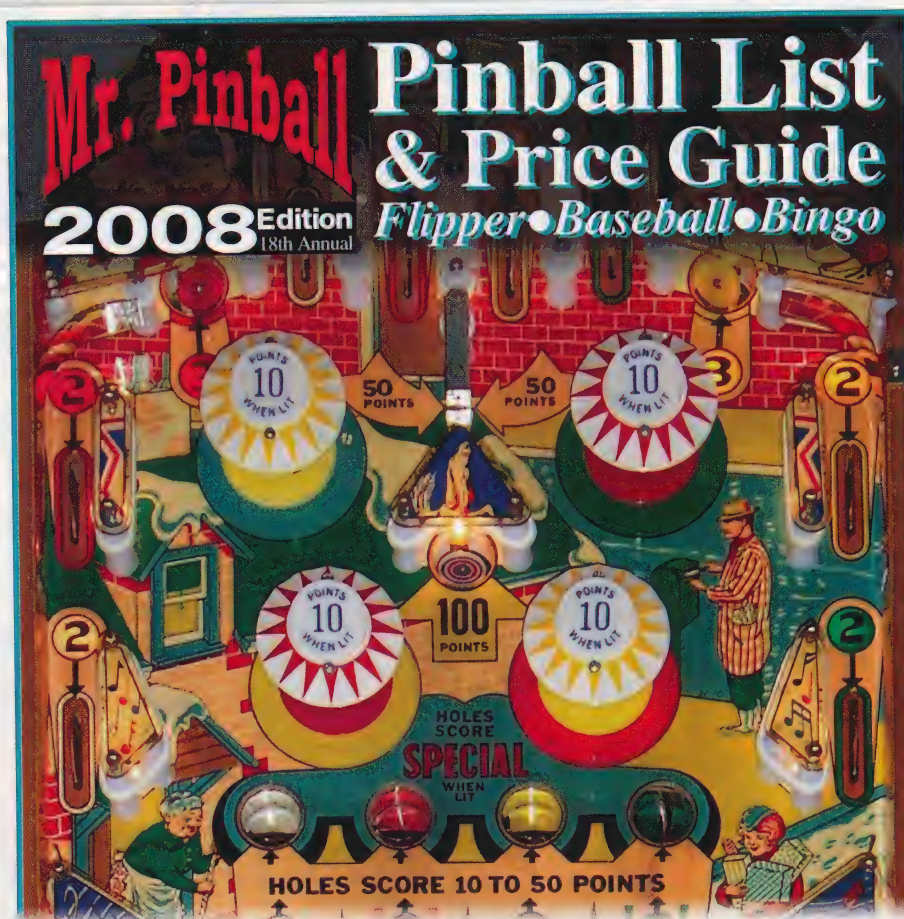
Putting a Price on Happiness

Like the annual pinball calendar by Alex Fuchs, the *Mr. Pinball Pinball List and Price Guide* is a welcome sign of Fall.

This year's edition includes everything you've come to expect, from a listing of machines in both alphabetical and chronological by manufacturer order, to a list of unique machine features, the number made, and a value based on a "very good" condition machine. In addition, there is a section on price trend analysis.

The *Mr. Pinball Pinball List and Price Guide* is an invaluable reference tool; from the hobbyist shopping for a new pinball machine to the owner who wants to know a bit more about the pins in their collection, there's something for everyone in this guide.

— Kevin Steele



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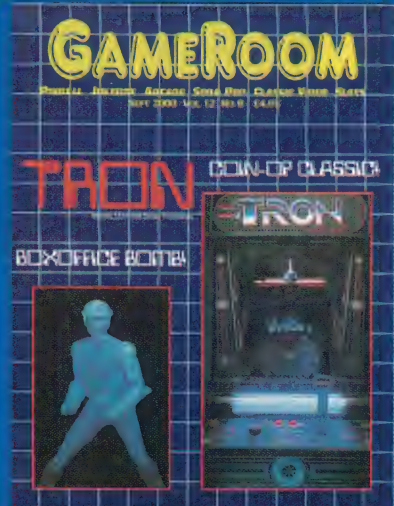
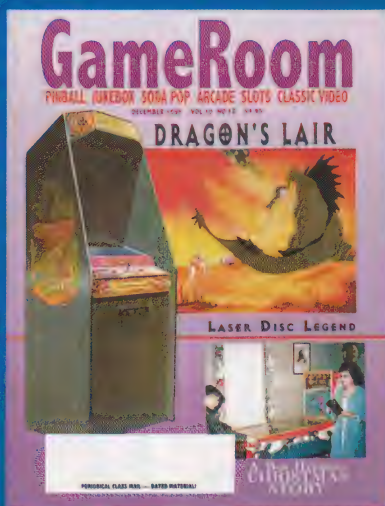


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Auction Watch

by Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin

I'm Starring on eBay!

Yes indeed, I'm a star on ebay! The feedback star rating system, that is. It wasn't too long ago when ebay had no such rating system, but in the past year they introduced a "Detailed Seller Ratings" to the feedback profiles. Now buyers can grade sellers in four ways: Item as Described, Communication, Shipping Time and Shipping & Handling Charges. It's a gold star rating platform with five being the highest. Your score can go up and down in increments of tenths. Buyers grade you at the time of leaving their written feedback. They don't have to do a detailed rating, but almost always do.

As one who abhorred report cards as a kid, I'm now subjected to the same kind of grading as an adult! Can you imagine? Buyers are now grading me with little gold stars. Mrs. Eastman used to do that when I was in 4th grade. I can still see her pressing them down onto our schoolwork and scribbling stuff like "Very Good!" and "Excellent!" next to them. Mine generally had a little note that, in today's text message equivalent, would read "WTF?"

Things aren't quite that bad for me in ebay land. What intrigues me is each person's perception of how they've been treated by yours truly. I happen to know that my shipping charges are extremely fair. I try to come within 50 cents of the actual cost. As a matter of fact, I refund overpayments! I recently misjudged a shipping fee and the buyer paid twice the correct amount. I sent him back the overage. Did I get a bump in my star rating? Nope.

Nor do I get perfect scores for shipping times even though I send everything the day after I get paid. Frankly, I think the shipping time category is bogus. We're at the mercy of the US Postal Service (or as I sometimes refer to them, the US Slowstal Service) and other carriers. It's they who decide how quickly something is delivered, not me! Buyers say my communication isn't perfect either, even though I alert buyers when I receive their payment and when their junk, whoops ... merchandise, will ship. My best rating has been a 5.0 for the item's description. Yet, as I sit here, my rating now stands at 4.9, a lousy tenth of a star from perfection. I deserve a 5.0 all the time, doggone it.

I'm frustrated by my starring role on ebay. I deserve 5.0 across the board. My lowest rating ever has been 4.8 and that's unacceptable to me. Why? It's because a friend of mine consistently maintains 4.9 and 5.0 ratings. I wouldn't mind it so much if it weren't for the fact that I taught him how to sell on ebay!

— Tim Ferrante



Coin-Op Auction Results (Compiled from eBay®)

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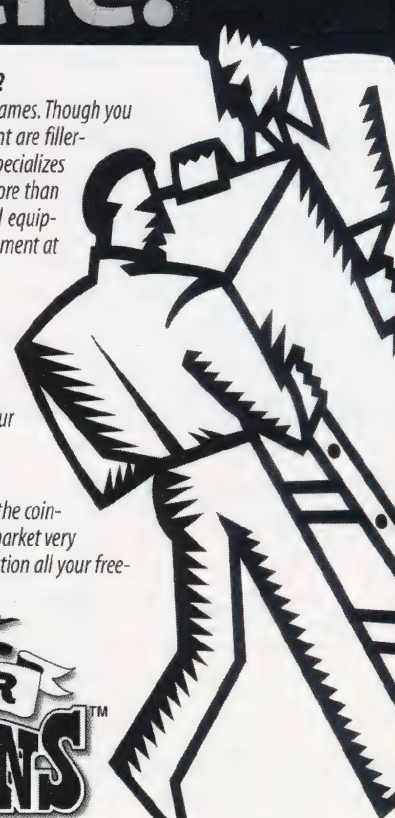
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3	Mats Runsten		361.39
4	Zach Sharpe		334.86
5	Josh Sharpe		328.37
6	Trent Augenstein		301.80
7	Chris Newsom		281.55
8	Jorian Engelbrektsson		246.68
9	Jim Belsito		220.55
10	Andy Rosa		209.21
11	Neil Shatz		201.34
12	Fredrik Lindberg		153.88
13	Donavan Stepp		138.26
14	Jörgen Holm		117.86
15	John Miller		113.38
16	Rick Stetta		111.88
17	Paul Madison		106.69
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A Chronological Progression of the Ms. Pac-Man World Title

- 933,580** Abdner Ashman
Pompano Beach, FL, April 6, 2006
- 920,310** Chris Ayra
Miami, FL, September 16, 1998
- 910,350** Rick Fothergill
Stoney Creek, ON, Canada, September 8, 1998
- 874,530** Chris Ayra
Victoria, BC, Canada, June 30, 1985
- 820,150** Chris Ayra
Miami, FL April 17, 1984
- 703,560** Billy Mitchell
Hollywood, FL, January 27, 1984
- 681,130** Tom Asaki
Twin Galaxies, Ottumwa, IA, October 2, 1983
- 557,120** Billy Mitchell
World Class Amusements, Wilmington, NC, September 20, 1983
- 436,500** Billy Mitchell
7-11, Hollywood, FL, July 1, 1983
- 419,950** Tom Asaki
Twin Galaxies, Ottumwa, IA, June 6, 1983
- 411,050** Spencer Oueren
Twin Galaxies, Ottumwa, IA, June 5, 1983
- 393,000** Tom Asaki
Bozeman, MT, May 5, 1983
- 257,100** Darren Olsen
Twin Galaxies, Ottumwa, IA, March 20, 1983
- 201,000** Joe Wingard
Whitefish, MT, June 1, 1982
- 130,300** Rick Greenwasser
Kirksville, MO May 20, 1982

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THE LAST WORD

by Kevin Steele

My Geek Moment

Look at the picture on this page, a snapshot moment of my meeting with game designer Eugene Jarvis from this year's Pin-ball Expo convention. Notice anything funny (like my totally goofy expression?)

This was my geek moment, a completely irrational exuberance at meeting someone whom popular culture may have overlooked, but who is nevertheless one of the most important figures in my life, and one of the key reasons why I am the way I am today.

So, before I continue on with my gushing, I suppose it's important that I explain exactly who Eugene Jarvis is, and why he's so important to me. Many of you may already know this, being involved in the same hobbies that I am, but bear with me.

Eugene Jarvis was one of William's most talented programmers, and the co-creator (with fellow programmer Larry DeMar) of some of the hardest (and most loved) arcade video games of all time, such as Defender, Stargate, and my personal reason for living, Robotron: 2084.

I cannot explain to you the effect Robotron: 2084 had on my life. I first encountered it at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. They had a huge arcade set up, and there were literally rows of Robotron games to play. I had never seen a game like it: just two joysticks, one to move, one to fire. No buttons to press, just two handles to grab onto and hang onto for dear life.

The onscreen playfield was a big box. No mazes, nothing else. Just you and a whole lotta enemies who materialized in and immediately began attacking. It was overwhelming, intimidating, and yet exhilarating. Games were over in mere seconds, it seemed.

The controls, while devilishly simple, seemed to require some special mental abilities: you had to use one hand to control where you were moving, while using the other hand to direct your stream of bullets at the nearest enemies. Some people just couldn't "grok" the controls, while others (like myself) took to it so naturally it was as if this game had been built specifically



for us (I write left-handed but play sports right-handed). It just felt *right*. I, for lack of a better cliché, became one with the machine.

It was a good thing I bonded with the controls (almost literally!) because the action was so intense, so overwhelming that it required to almost completely detach your higher thought processes and operate out of pure animal reflex. Using programming techniques that were radically advanced at the time, Robotron managed to place literally hundreds of enemies onscreen at any one time—it is not a game to play if you want to ponder the day's events at the office. I completely lose awareness of my surroundings while playing Robotron.

Of course, after the World's Fair I had to play any Robotron machine I could find, and luckily my local mall arcade had one. After school I would often walk to the mall and play the game until my fingers bled (literally – I had blood blisters on the inner edge of my ring fingers where they touched the bottom of the balltops on the joysticks, I was gripping so hard! After a long gaming session I could still see and hear Grunts (the main enemy) chasing after me, even as I walked home, exhausted and quarterless.



There's no logical reason for falling in love with a machine like I did with Robotron—it's just a game, after all, a mild diversion from your daily existence. And yet, it took hold of me in a way I cannot explain in any sort of rational way. A simple pile of arcade controls and computer parts had become a life-changing experience for me, a touchstone of my time on planet Earth.

Time moved on, the local mall arcade closed, I went to college, got a job, got married, and got lost in the daily drudgery of life. Robotron never left my radar, though: the game was ported to nearly every computer I ever owned, so I always had a version of Robotron to play, even if many of the versions didn't hold up as well as the original arcade version. (I've vowed to buy my own Robotron arcade cabinet one of these days!)

Well, enough gushing. With all of this personal history, I hope you can at least partially understand my loopy, irrational exuberance at finally meeting the man responsible for the magic that is Robotron: 2084. And to Eugene, if you're reading this: there's no need for a restraining order: I just wanted to say thank you for all the fun you've provided me over the last 25 years. Ya done good. **GR**

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